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POET LORE

A QUARTERLY OF WORLD LITERATURE

Founded in 1889 by

CHARLOTTE PORTER *and* HELEN A. CLARKE

JOHN HEARD, *Editor*

EDMUND R. BROWN, *Managing Editor*

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IN MEMORIAM

CHARLOTTE E. PORTER

It is with sorrow that the Editors record the death on January 16, 1942, at Boston, Massachusetts, of Charlotte E. Porter, one of the two founders, and for many years Editor, of *Poet Lore.*

In 1889 Miss Porter, in collaboration with Helen A. Clarke, organized *Poet Lore* as "a monthly magazine devoted to Shakespeare and Browning." Within a very few years the magazine abandoned its original specialization, greatly broadened its field, and undertook to bring to English readers the hitherto untranslated works of outstanding foreign authors, especially dramatists — a thing never before attempted. During the thirty-seven years of Miss Porter's editorship, *Poet Lore* attained and firmly held a unique, recognized, and respected position. After her retirement in 1927, subsequent Editors have tried to maintain the high standard she had established.

In addition to her task of editing *Poet Lore,* her studies and editing of Shakespeare were extensive and of a high order of excellence. She produced a two-volume edition of that poet's works in 1896; a twelve-volume pocket edition in 1898; a six-volume, Coxhoe edition, of the complete works of Mrs. Robert Browning in 1900; Pembroke edition of Shakespeare, twelve volumes in 1903, followed by a thirteen-volume English edition of Shakespeare; and from 1903 to 1913 she was sole editor of a forty-volume First Folio Edition.

Deep as was Miss Porter's interest in Shakespeare and Browning, she was far more proud of what she had made of *Poet Lore,* as evidenced by a remark which, only a few years before her death, she made to the late Robert Grant: "There are many editions of Shakespeare, and many people have written about him, but there is only one *Poet Lore.* That is *my* beloved child."

JOHN HEARD

MARK BENNETT ON ROANOKE

By H. K. RUSSELL

I. PRIME

This Time, This Place

The drifting ages have brought down this land
Into the sea: its capes and islands hold
Their oaks and pines at ease beneath a gentle sky.
Here sea and land live intimate.
Together, they receive the rain or sun;
Together, when the great ocean rages,
Share in the havoc of the storm. Here
Dogs and deer and copper-colored men
Get and beget, slay and are slain.

Here, on a day like many other days,
The Venetian Cabot passes in his barque,
Searching a new road for the English;
The ripples of his wake toss in the sun,
Then lapse into the common pattern of the waves.

Storm-driven, a Spanish galleon on these sands
Is flogged to splinters by the heavy surf;
Its wretches live on maize and venison,
Persuade the copper-colored women, but do not stay
To see their fair-skinned children. Remembering
Seville, they fit canoes with sails
Made from their shirts, and so escape
To death on the high seas.

And to this place
Come Raleigh's captains, Barlowe
And Amadas, charged to discover and possess
The land in God's name for the queen. It is July;
Now the sweet message of the grape
Is in the air, and sand and sea are bright
As heaven. The English coast up from the south,
Then round a cape and follow as the land

Leads westward. Soon the first inlet
Opens, and they reach a quiet anchor
In a new haven in a new world.

The men and women living in this world
Of sunlight, trees and sand and water
Are fitted for their place: a breechcloth makes
The only shadow on their tawny skins;
Their moving shows an easy thrift
Between the senses and the sinews. To the Englishmen they seem
The children of a king who left his state
To worship God outdoors.

The land
Is heavy with rich timber, cypress
And cedar, oak and pitch pine, and many more
Of excellent sweet smell and quality.
From the unmeasured continent the river Occam
Surfeited moves hugely to the sea,
Whose tides have raised a line of sand
To mark their provinces. Inside these banks
A piece of earth called Roanoke
Shows like a garden in the slate-gray Occam.

They have seen the land and its fertility,
And now the English let their sails out to the wind,
Returning to their world already old
In men and men's commodities. To see
The power of this world two Indians,
Wanchese and Manteo, will hazard life
Against the white men's faith and skill.

The Sword

A twelvemonth after, Raleigh sends
To found his city in Virginia five-score
Men-at-arms; the veteran Amadas; John White,
Cartographer; and at their head, Sir Richard Grenville, general.

They who have ventured to the white men's city
Tell what they've seen: the English are a nation
Too great for counting, with overplus of clothes
And food and weapons. They seem to Manteo
Like gods; with them he is as well content as though
A grave and gentle god were his companion.
To Wanchese they are great, and thus too many
For their place; they have no wampum and few skins;
They are returned to kill his people, steal
His goods, and fill his land with strangers.

These English make discovery of the lands
And people southward from Roanoke. At Aquascogoc,
Village on the main, an aged conjurer
Sees the cup Sir Richard drinks from,
And knows it to be potent in the white men's art —
A bright cup of a rare white metal; by stealth
He takes the chalice for his own.

Sir Richard
Asks for drink, and rages. "That cup,
Sir Walter gave me! Captain Amadas, go you
And fetch me back my cup, hang
Me the savage, and put fire to his fields."

At Aquascogoc the savages have fled.
The Englishmen spoil utterly their corn,
Full-eared and ready for the harvest.

As August ends, Sir Richard weighs his anchor
And sails for England. On Roanoke his men
Close up the walls of their stockade and wait
For Easter and supplies promised by Raleigh.
They learn to count the winter days
With sun and moon and morning prayer for calendar.
In spring they plant their fields. But hunger
Comes before the harvest; and the daily gift
Of corn from Manteo's tribe soon brings
The Indians to leanness; the venison they eat
Is on the main: there Wanchese hides, and works
Upon his chief to kill the white men.

His plan
Of death upon a certain night by fire
And clubs is opened to the English by the son
Of Manteo's brother, a boy who has the keenness
Of a beast in all his senses — the hairy one,
Uwaara. Forewarning is bought cheap
At any cost: Uwaara with his hand points out
The book he's heard old John White talk from.

"I'd liefer he had asked my sword. It is
My commonplace book, with a dozen psalms
In meter, and a part of Genesis — done
In the rimeless amble-gallop that these ramping poets
Use — Mark Bennett wrote it out for me.
Here are the drawings that I made myself
To fit it: the Chaos, Eden, Adam and Eve;
And there's the serpent. I'd meant it for my daughter
Eleanor."

Uwaara stands and points his finger
At the book until he gets it.

That night the English
Cross to mainland. There they offer to talk
With Wanchese and his chief, Wingina. In the parley
A hothead cries the watchword "Christ
Our victory," draws out his sword, and as the heavy moonlight
Glances on the blade, cuts off Wingina's head.

Blood-Doom

Now Wanchese must begin his work again
To answer all his people's fears: these English
If they're cut spill blood and die;
They have their women and are hot for them:
He's seen their funerals and brothels.

But his work
Is easier than he'd thought. The great boats
Of the English come to bring the white men
Food, and thunder for their guns: in the night

A wind begins; four days it howls
Against them, drowns their men and goods,
And teaches them to quit the island where they've starved.

The boy who brings this word has other news
He'll tell if he may touch the sorcerer's bright
Cup; he takes it in his hands to weigh it
With his book and says his pictures hold
A stronger magic. Then he gives his warning
That the English purpose to come back and live
On Roanoke: that great one, maker of the pictures,
Swore it.

Before the moon has changed
From new to old the Englishman who owned
The sorcerer's cup has stopped at Roanoke
And left a guard to hold it.

Wanchese
By taunts and promises harangues a band
To follow him and see his proof that white men
Are mere flesh. He gags and binds
A woman raided from Croatan, where her dark mother
Had received one of the shipwrecked Spaniards. Then
They cross to Roanoke and hidden wait
Beside the trap an Englishman has set for fish.
The fellow comes. Wanchese cuts loose
His captive, shows her the poisoned arrow
At his bowstring, and sends her to the beach.
When she is near enough he takes a twig
And cracks it. The Englishman wheels round and sees
A woman standing almost within his touch.
She seems to feel the shock and sting
Of death between her shoulderblades and moves up to him.
When he has her, Wanchese lets
A flight of arrows at them.

In broad sun
He leads across the island. Near the fort he puts
His sword of fire-hardened wood behind his back

And asks a parley. When the white man comes
To meet him, Wanchese splits his head.
The Englishmen rush out against their enemy's blood-frenzy.
Panic crowds them to their boat and follows
To the rim of sand that marks the ocean's edge.
There, in the night, the lapping of the waves
Becomes the stealthy paddle of their foes
And they push off into the ebbing tide.

II. RALEIGH'S CITY

Roanoke

But when July has come again
The English vessels bring more lives
To Roanoke. Men, and women with their children,
Come to give this land the good
Familiar shape of home through love
And childbirth and, if God wills, death in it.

John White forgets his color-brush in this,
His greatest work, the making of Virginia,
With a hundred lives to be transplanted to the sandy
Earth where last year's English blood
Has seeded mushroom death between the resin-scented
Pine roots. Under his eye the heavy logs
Are raised into a bastioned fort, and round about,
The cabins for those men who have brought hither
Wives and children.

Helping at the wall
About their city, Mark Bennett holes a stake
Into the ground and tamps the dirt around it.

"I like to see a poet sweat,"
Dick Shabedge says — "behold the bard,
The pizzle of his Pegasus upon his brow. Viccars,
Lend us your axe; this stake wants pointing."

"Take it," Viccars says, "while I fight off
These midges at my ears."

Mark straightens up
And looks at Shabedge. "Dick, if you'll let be
My versing, I'll pass by that business
In the kitchen at Hayes Barton." Mark smiles
But does not join in Viccars' laugh.

"Enough," Dick says; "we all have peccadillos.
The wisest bull sometimes mistakes his pasture."

Viccars holds his axe again. "They said
In London, some of them, that we had signed
With Raleigh's company to skip our botches.
My record's clean; I came because I wanted.
It's good to be where Englishmen are taking
Hold against the world. And my Elizabeth
Was ready from the moment that I broached it."

"We came," Mark Bennett says, "each
For his reason. Some of us came, I think,
To find what we had never had
But felt we'd lost."

Dick Shabedge grunts.
"Patriots and dodgers, soldiers, dreamers,
Here we are until we're taken off.
Dig earth in any kingdom: you'll find worms.
Come, friends; the sun goes down.
We'll set these half a dozen stakes
And call our palisado done."

Eleanor

In the fresh morning of an August Sunday,
John White comes to ask his daughter's health;
He finds her with her husband Ananias at the door
Of their new cabin. "Good morrow, Eleanor;
Good morrow, Dare. Keep seated, child;
You take no better care for your condition

Than your mother — Well, the chimney daubed,
The floor new-sanded: 'tis more than good enough
For this rude life. Come, Ananias,
To the chapel. We baptize Manteo today."

Ananias takes her head between his hands:
The feel of it is better to him for the twelve-month
That he's had her. "Sweet Eleanor, I half repent
Bringing you here. And yet your words
As we lay softly talking in our bed last night
Are a full answer: evil may reach us
Anywhere; we can but jump it, like the poor
Ape at the fair, if the eye's quick enough.
Had we stayed home, the no to this adventure
Would ride us out of ease until we aged past
Caring. — Here's Amosens for company. If you
Should need me, send her."

Eleanor leans back
Against her doorway, comforted to see how Amosens
Walks easy in the savage world,
Her tawny skin like morning sunlight;
The love this girl has offered seems
To Eleanor a token of her welcome in the wilderness.
As they talk with one another, filling out by laughter
Any lack in common words, Mark Bennett comes
From roaming in the woods. His eyes, intense
And upcast at the majesty of pine and oak,
Seem almost shocked when finally they light upon the women.

"Good morrow, Mark."

"You two should rest so
And be made a statue."

"I like much better
To live under the sun," Amosens answers him,
And stretches her young body, arms overhead, arching
Her back and holding out her breasts into the sunlight.
Mark Bennett's face is anguished, and he soon
Has gone.

"Oh, Eleanor, how did I speak
To hurt him?"

Eleanor is half mused, yet pities him.
" 'Twas not your words," she says; "Mark 's young,
And his philosophy is learned from books and stage-plays."

Mark

Mark Bennett's anguished mind talks
To itself and drives him back into the woods:
"Ah, God, that beauty and the flesh should be
So hand-locked. Is there naught beautiful
The bright soul can rest on, undaunted
By the darkness in the blood? My tongue can sound
A word, and then another: the brain's less free
To cleave between its objects (there's my theme),
And when the color and the touch of life spread banquets
For the sense, lust comes unbidden.
Can a man not lay his fingers to a cut
Of velvet cloth but's codpiece whispers
'Tis like a wench's skin? And I, looking on Amosens,
Felt the serpent writhe into my Eden.
Is there no land nor climate where
Beauty does not play the bawd to rotten fantasy?
Yet, here on Roanoke the air is sweet,
And I, until this moment, had forgot the stink
That vents from foul and flatulent old cities.
Aye, foul, foul London,
The old crone that squats on Thames-bank. She
Drove me from my studies to this island; and still
She crawls between, between me and whatever
Might be beautiful. And now she rots
The image of this Indian girl into the shape
Of bastard-breeding lust."

So Mark roams on
In self-communion, probing his wound to ease it.

Virginia

When her child's time has come, and Eleanor

Has slept past death, Ananias kneels
To her and whispers, "It is over, dear,
And you are safe. I did not think,
Last night, to see you look so well
Today."

"Let us forget last night.
We'll call our child Virginia, and she'll grow up
With this good land, fair, with friends about her,
And in her own house."

Now Amosens
Comes in to say that Mark and Richard Shabedge
Wait outside. Already Shabedge
Calls: "What's this? Here stand I
With my sixpence in my hand, zealous to buy
My entrance into Master Dare's museum. Shall
Good Dick Shabedge be refused the blessing
Of his eyes with this most rare, outlandish,
And voluptuous object?"

"Come," Ananias says;
"But I ask you, bull, to bellow softly."

" 'Tis her virginity he fears for. Look you,
Husbandman Dare, if Mark so much as whisper
Like a courtier in her ear, I'll geld him."

"Careful, Dick; I'll have no jests
To make my daughter blush."

"Aye,
Even now she hoists the crimson flag
Of modesty: she's true carnelian from stem
To stern."

"And here," Mark adds, "like the shepherd
In the pageant, I've brought the child a spoon."

John White

At the summer's end John White must go

To England in their vessel for commodities they stand
In greatest need of. As he leaves his daughter
And his grandchild, all his friends and duties
In Virginia, he gives his latest counsel
To them: should they remove before he comes
Again, they cut the name of their new place
Upon the doorpost of the fort; if — God forbid —
They leave distressed, they make a cross
Above as token.

From the land's edge
They bid him godspeed, calling farewell
Into the wind. There, as the sailors sweat
To weigh the anchor, a capstan-bar cracks
Like a worm-cut bough that drops its fruit
Before the sap has filled it; twelve men
Are hurt, the anchor still unweighed.
The master of the vessel hefts his axe
And cuts the cable through. Soon
The watchers on the sand lose first
The storm-blacked hull, then half the sail,
Then all, and suddenly are straining at an empty
Line between the sky and sea.

Wanchese

Deep
In the forests of the main, his runner tells
Wanchese that Roanoke is free from the magician
Who made pictures. Wanchese has seen
Those pictures; one held likenesses
Female and male and snake. He
Would have kept that book had not the hairy one
Raised up his arm and offered such a curse
Upon him as would bring his hopes to dung.
But he can show the picture's meaning
To his people: an English woman has been big
And now she has her young; these white men
Were created like themselves, the primal woman
For their nation being white, who therefore by the working
Of a god brought forth white children
To begin the generations.

The first autumn
Moon is full; the season is yet warm enough
For fighting. Wanchese calls out his tribesmen
In the hour between day's end and moon-rise;
On the dark water they slide the bows
Of their canoes toward Roanoke. At the familiar beach
They noiselessly pull up, then move into the forest
Like a vision of the ghosts in hell sent
To a man born blind and deaf.

And Raleigh's township in Virginia sleeps.
The guards set in the western bastion,
Henry Berry and Ambrose Viccars, watch against the dark.
Viccars is thinking of his cabin and his bed,
And his Elizabeth. "She's good in bed," he thinks,
"And seems to know by nature all the tricks. Sometimes
She asks more than a man can comfortably do.
But that's my good luck now. I'll worry
When I'm old."

His fellow watchman balances his gun
On his left hand and slips his right palm back and forth
Along the lock and barrel. He speaks, but does not
For an instant interrupt his vigil. "Wingina's
People must be satisfied with the revenge they took
On those poor devils Grenville left here. If they
Don't speak up soon I think I'll go across
To th' mainland for some meat. Our guns have killed
Or frightened all the beasts off Roanoke. A bow's
The only weapon fit for hunting. It kills
Your meat and doesn't roar tomorrow's dinner
Out of reach. A good tough bow answers
A kind of hunger in the muscles of my arm and in my fingers."

And round about their post, within the stockade, Raleigh's
township
Sleeps. Dick Shabedge grunts, then turns
To dream again. Mark Bennett, with the wrinkles of a frown
Across his brow, sleeps as he's thrown himself, face down,
His loins pressed hard against his narrow bed.
And in his cabin Ananias Dare and Eleanor his wife

Sleep, each with a hand upon the other's body,
The senses drawing through this touch a gentle rapture
Of their spirits. A whimper from the baby rouses them:
"Aye me," says Eleanor, and goes to ease
Virginia's fret; with a splinter kindled
From the ashes, Ananias lights the candle.

Henry Berry sees the narrow line of light
Along the doorsill. Then he sees a part of it
Blacked out and in a moment clear again.
A mastiff growls. "Viccars, look yonder
At Dare's doorstep." The moon rides free
Above the pines to mark their breastplates silver.
Viccars puts up his hand to rub his eyes.
A sharp blow strikes him at the armpit and throws him
Back against the logs. Then the hot sting
Breaks in a scream through his clenched teeth.
Berry has fired into the darkness on the ground
And now yells the alarm. Time,
For the splitting of a moment, hangs on the upswing,
Then plunges at the downward arc to measure out
This fraction of eternity. Ananias catches up
His gun, bids Eleanor look to the baby,
And blots out the candle. He throws wide the door,
Ready to kill whatever blocks their passage to the fort.
The moon is high enough to show a painted mask
Half white half red that yells at him. He clubs
His gun and strikes full in Wanchese's face.
From the bastion Henry Berry now can see
The dozen Indians inside the stockade and the hundred others
Laboring to mount the sharpened stakes. He loads his gun
And just before an arrow is full-drawn at him
Puts lead into the bowman's belly.
His fellow sentinels begin to find the target.
Mark Bennett, as sensation thumps back
To his brain, hears Shabedge cry "What's on?"
And follows to the bastion. The colonists with shouts
And screams crowd to the fort. Mark
Fires and loads: there is a sort of ringing
In his ears that keeps him steady. The heated

Barrel of his gun has burned him twice
Before he knows this is the fight they've planned for,
And can see the flesh his bullets strike.
Then an arrow shudders in the log beside him
And he aims again.

The tools of death
Are lead and bone-tipped wood; the lead
Strikes harder, but the bone is poisoned
To burn up the blood. The skin is white
Or copper, clothed or naked, but these men
Bleed red alike, suffer alike
The final chaos of the senses before the heart
Can stop.

When the moon has filled the stockade
With its light, Wanchese twists round
His battered face to know how his cause
Fares. Half his men are dead,
But he can see a score of English
Lying among them. He calls his warriors
To quit their shelter behind the cabins
And to climb the walls to safety.

Inside the fort
The English count the living that they may know
The dead. They venture out to gather up
Those friends who took the long way
To Roanoke to die. Around the fort,
Under the moon the dead lie like drowned men
Sunk in gray tideless water — save one,
Who hangs caught in the stockade, dripping.

Land's Edge

Winter on Roanoke is cold and wet.
Oak leaves lie sodden on the ground;
The needles of the pine sieve the wet air
To drop a constant minor rain. The damp
And cold dilute the blood, opening the heart
To hopelessness. The English reckon their store of food

Against the months till harvest. John White should come
In spring, but Spain and the Atlantic wait between.
And those who know the ending of France's Florida
Are cursed with visions of Menendez, of his assault,
And of the sudden slaughter in the heavy rain.
The watchmen listen as the tide rides up
The land's edge, and their fantasy creates
The hollow rattle of ship's gear,
The threat of Spanish voices; courage
Cannot quell the fear that when the heavy
Rain-cloud rifts, the fatal galleons
Will show like fictions on an arras. This
Is the crazing cycle of the winter.

III. EARTH TIME

Moonfire

The new year with its spring and summer
Brings a life whose wants have outreached
Hunger. The hoped supplies from Raleigh
Are unsent or taken by the foes between;
But this new land has drunk the sweat
Of work and love, the roots of oak
And pine have tasted English blood,
And the responsive earth yields up her harvest.

While Ambrose Viccars' life was burned
Within him by the poisoned arrow's hot contagion,
His wife Elizabeth lay in her bed and dreamed
Of young Mark Bennett: the tides flow
Though the moon be but a shadow.

Her widowhood
Was woeful, and then nervous. Elizabeth
Is one to whom the loss of the act
Is heavier than the loss of the actor. Now,
In the cool summer twilight vaguely forethinking,
She rests beside the path where Mark will come
From mending sail at the creek on the north side
Of Roanoke. She has to speak to him,
Or he would pass unseeing. "Mark," she says,

"If I had been a snake, I could have struck
Before you'd got your eyes down to the ground."
She smiles, then lets a touch of grief show
In her face. "What do you think of, Mark,
When you stare so at nothing?" She moves
A little from her place to mean that he
Should sit and tell her.

The sad dark eyes
And woman's lips call to his pity; at her side
He answers, "I'm making tropes to catch
The meaning of the world — a fool's job";
But his tone shows that he sets a higher value
On his phrases.

"The world," she says, "is simply
Having or not having. The first is good;
Not having is a curse too bitter for the flesh
To bear." She holds her tongue and smiles
At Mark to change his puzzled look, then adds,
"I must not rail. I am not pretty when I rail."
He makes the only answer — "You are pretty" —
And she lays her hand on his to thank him.

He studies her black brows, and the little hairs
Growing low at the temple. The other hair is black,
Imagination whispers, and the dark tortured look
Comes to his face. In his soul Mark groans,
"I'm cursed and evil always."

Elizabeth
Misreads his look and puts her hand up
To the bosom of her dress, as though till now forgotten.
"Oh, I loosed my dress against the heat while I
Sat here alone. I did not fasten it again."
She gives her dress a touch, but leaves it
Looser than it was. Mark stands before her;
As she rises close to him the senses
Smother up the brain; passion drives her
To him. In fright and anger Mark

Casts off the woman's body. "Mark, have mercy."
Then he goes. Crouched in the woods
She thrusts her fingers in the earth and moans.

Sun's - Way

This second August brings on Roanoke the birthdate
Of the child Virginia. Ananias Dare and Richard Shabedge
Leave their labor in the cornfields and now slowly
Take their way across the sunlight to the stockade.
Amosens walks after them, in her young arms
The child whose innocent eyes have seen
The twelve-month's ills and pleasures of these English
On their island.

"We shall be ready for it,"
Ananias says, "when the wild ducks call the winter."

"Aye, my belly cannot cope with such a winter
As the last. Let death come at me with Wanchese's
Bashed - in particolored face — he'll find Dick Shabedge
Ready. This inch by inch extinction
Breaks my heart and makes my belt a mockery."

"Wanchese has found he cannot drive us out.
He's ready for a league with us if we
But show him he can trust us. John White has told me
That the Indians learned to call an oath
A lie after Wingina's killing."

"It was
A lesson," Richard says, "they'd conned before.
But such as Mark and you would have us
Make our peace with them. Young Mark's
A fool — and you, friend Ananias, you've
So far forgot your Hebrew grandsire
That a lie's unknown: you do not speak
And therefore cannot read that language."

Near the gate
They stop till Amosens has come in sight.

"Young Mark's a fool," Richard speaks lower,
"But I add, an honest fool. Not a se'nnight
Since, I saw the widow Viccars with him
In the woods. She'd boarded him, but Mark
Cast all the grapples off and 'scaped.
If I can read the signs aright, Elizabeth's
A she would make the frog's legs for any man
That asked her."

"Not a man that honors
Poor dead Viccars would touch her out of wedlock.
For the woman's comfort, Shabedge, and the colony's,
I recommend you marry her."

"I'm not
Your man. I'll shrink up like a sackcloth monk
Before I'll eat a dead man's supper,
Though 't be served hot."

"There's Amosens,
And in her arms Virginia. That boy with them 's
Uwaara."

"Aye," Richard says — they pass
The gate and turn toward Ananias' cabin —
"Uwaara, the hairy one."

"I've heard strange tales
Of what his eyes can see. They're like
A rat's eyes."

"The savages have set him up
To be the special agent of their god.
He tells them where to set their weirs for fish;
He sees the deer when hunters can see nothing
But the trees. Berry says he smells them.
That shag of hair down 's backbone he was born with;
Though he wants some half-a-dozen years to be a man,
He has the tools that make a man."

"Such monstrous haste in nature 's not unknown;
It's new to let it mark a seer."

"As good a mark as any, Ananias,
In a land three thousand English miles from Christendom."

Thus they pass through the noises of the village
To the doorstep where Eleanor is waiting. When they've
Come near, she makes a little cry and puts
Her hand up to her mouth. They turn and see
Virginia, held in Uwaara's arms,
And naked. The child is staring round-eyed
At the Indian's face and neither weeps
Nor laughs. When Ananias takes her to return her
To the mother's hands, they see she has
The string about her middle and the bit of moss
That Indian children wear. Uwaara speaks,
Then looks to Amosens to turn his meaning
Into white men's words: "He says the Spirit
Called her to our people. He took her clothes
And talked to them and burned them."
The two men drive him off. Uwaara,
Stepping slowly backward, goes,
His eyes intent upon them, not
In fear or anger, but like one who,
Seeing, is amazed at blindness.

The keeping
Of Virginia's birthday lacks the joy
They had intended. When Mark has come,
And they have supped, they raise a song.
But Eleanor is out of heart to sing the English air;
She's comforted by Ananias' arm about her shoulders,
Yet must turn her head toward where the child
Is sleeping.

"Come, we'll not be sad for England,"
Richard says. "Good Ananias, take your pipe
And fill it, give Mistress Eleanor a whiff; 'twill purge
The melancholic humour. If she will not, I'll speak on

Anyhow and praise this herb the Spaniards
Call tobacco. The fire 's his element;
I put him in this pipe shaped out of earth,
The heaviest of the elements as the fire 's the lightest:
So: I marry the extremes and have
The *aurea mediocritas* that Aristotle teaches — ''

''It's Horace you intend,'' Mark says.

''They taught
You that? — As the herb assumes his element
I draw his fumes into my head and purge them
Through my nostrils: so: again, I send his essence
To the caverns of the stomach and expel them — thus.
The fumes ascend into the brain, descend
Into the belly, there exhort the spirits animal and vital,
Enlarge the fancy, digest crudities, and make
Man's frame fit tenement for his soul, the soul
An easy tenant of the body.''

Amosens comes
From watching by Virginia's cradle. ''I go now
To the camp by the cornfields. My father
Watches there tonight at Manteo's bidding.''

''We'll walk together to the gate.'' For Eleanor
Must learn what truth she can about Uwaara.

When they
Are out of hearing, Ananias turns
To Mark and Richard. ''That boy, whose foolish play —
God grant it folly — so troubled Eleanor;
He's a mere savage.''

''No,'' Mark says;
''I've had some halting talk with him.
He's wise in ways we do not know.
And in his ways direct and simple like the sun.
We'd better have him for Virginia's friend
Than enemy.''

"May be. I'll pass your word
To Eleanor. Now, Amosens, like Manteo
And some others of our friends, is English though her skin
Be Indian-color. And she speaks our language clearly,
With a pleasing difference of sound."

" 'Tis a good
Skin," Richard says, "and a notable thigh
In any language. Ha, Mark, do you blush? I've seen her
Look on you, and you on her, though 'twas not eye to eye.
Go, lad; conduct the maid to her pavilion.
I weep for English chivalry."

"I'll go,"
Mark says, "but for my causes, not for yours."

When Mark has left them, Ananias says, "Be easy
With him, Richard. He is young and moody;
He will hurt and sicken in this weaponed world
Where you feel only prickles."

"There's that
Inside me writhes at Eden innocence.
When Mark looks pale and conscious, then I say,
'Come now, old Dick. Let's make him blush
Till his cheeks bleed.' I'm one that thinks
Friend Adam's appetite for meat and drink
And aproned Eve was quickened by the apple."

Night Wine

Mark has determined in his mind to break
The link that hand-locks beauty to the body's appetite;
While all his senses bring the image of the girl
Into his brain he whispers, like an exorcism, "I'll be man,
Not beast; 'Not for lust's sake' — they are poet's words
That say it all." Beside him Amosens walks quietly.
A sudden rustling in the bushes stops them.
Mark thrusts the girl behind him and calls out,
"Who is it?" Amosens laughs. "It is some animal;
A dog, Mark. No enemy would make that careless sound.

You English think a noise is danger. Silence
Is danger. My people know death does not send
A runner; he comes himself."

"And takes the life
Unready."

"What's unready, Mark? A day's or season's
Staring in his face is little either good
Or bad in all the changes of the moon.
The old men teach us not to be afraid of him."
"What do you say about the fears inside the mind?"

She steps aside in walking to avoid a thorny
White-flowered bough; Mark feels her press
Against him all along his body. "Inside the mind?"
She asks. His fingers have to touch her,
But the sinews cannot be gentle; he holds her
By the shoulders roughly. The crescent moon
Gives light enough to show her dark wide eyes,
Her rich lips slightly parted. "Why
Do I have to touch you, Amosens?"

"I do not
Understand you, Mark."

"O God," he says
And beats his fists against his eyes as he had done
When he played Oedipus at school.

"Mark,
You are hurt. How have I hurt you,
Mark?"

His eyes are shut, and yet
He knows how close she is, and knows
That he could touch her, and the touch would seem
A chance or nothing. "If the hunger
In my hands," Mark thinks, "were eased against her
For a moment, then the beast inside me

Might be quiet. But I'd sooner
Kill what nuzzles after sneaking pleasures."
Amosens walks away from him, then turns.
"Mark, are you talking to that god you English have?
Does he send aches against you when you touch me?"

"Not that god," he says, "perhaps another."

"Then like me, Mark, and tell your god
To like me."

They go on toward the cornfields
And the camp. Beyond, they see the flares
Of fishing boats, and on the beach, the fire
Where the fishermen have lit their torches.

"Come, Mark; no man is yonder.
Stop by that fire and tell me what your trouble
Is."

She sets a pineknot in its place
Among the flames, then kneels into the sand.
Mark stands and looks at her. The fire
Makes a copper-golden path along her thighs
Up to the leather apron; the pineknot
Catches, and its light shapes the neat roundness
Of her breasts and lifts her face out of the dark.
Mark draws his breath in at the pressure
Of such beauty as his dreams could never
Fashion. She is the golden figure
Of the elements made into life: all
Warmth and earth and seas and skies
Curved in the richness of her flesh. "Essential
Beauty hath its holiness," Mark whispers,
And kneels down before her: the deed of worship
Clears his soul and leaves him weak.

Amosens has watched him; now she smiles.
"Your god tells you to like me, Mark."

"I cannot see or hear beyond you,
Amosens, but that's as surely all
As there is dark beyond this fire
And your body."

Amosens lies down along the sand,
Moving her shoulder and her flank until she's made
A couch against the earth. She shuts her eyes.
"I am happy, Mark."

He sees the flexing
Of the little muscles of her belly when she talks.
The holy mood is gone, and he is hot
To touch her. He lies down beside her
And his fingers trace the little muscles;
Her breasts are soft like sleep that offers
In a sensual dream the minikin pressure
Of their points against his palm. He follows out
The little line that shapes the color of her lips.

Amosens in drowsy ease half opens
Her dark eyes to look at him; her lips
Part gently as she breathes the scented night.
"Good, Mark, all good," she whispers
As she rises on her knees and turns her head
To make a witness of the world around her.

The channels of his blood still echo
To her image; Mark knows that he
Must hold this time and place: "Dreams,
Nights, philosophies, all ending things;
The hot, recurrent sun, the subtle,
Wayward air, the uncounted stars,
Whose bright points measure time
Across the sky: all items cosmic,
Mutable, immutable, are summed and cancelled
In the meaning of this instant."

When Amosens stands up,

And Mark's eyes follow her, he sees her buttocks
Covered with the sand she's lain in.
His tongue goes dry and bitter:
"She's common meat and members," he whispers
To himself; "her belly has its guts, and they've
Their orifice to do the barnyard duty. What
Have I been? What am I now? Which devil
Poisons me?"

He walks beside her to the camp,
Then blindly finds his path.

As he returns
He comes upon the place where rustling in the bushes
Stopped them; and just ahead discerns
A figure in the darkness. "Good evening, Mark."
It is Elizabeth; her voice is slow and listless.
"You and your Indian heard a dog
In the woods?" she says; "maybe; a bitch
Is a kind of dog."

"You ought to be at home,
Elizabeth. I'll see you safely there."

"Safely,
No doubt. Did you see your little naked Indian
As safely home?"

"I warn you stop,
Elizabeth. I'm not in the mood to hear you."

"And never were. If you had been — but I'm
Too sleepy to be bitter. What's the brawl?"
Within herself she says, "What do they think
I am? a harlot or a saint? I'm neither.
When I caught him playing with himself
He didn't stop; he just looked at me.
I liked the putting off my clothes there
In the woods. You'd think he was some sort
Of animal to see the hair on 's back and hear
Him squeal. I puzzle how gross my sin is.

If need be I can quit this queasy Roanoke
And go to Croatan."

They reach her door.
"Good night, Saint Mark," she says; "you're sinless;
Do you throw stones at dogs caught in the act?
Best take your little savage, if she'll have you.
I like her breed."

Ebb Tide

The last moon of summer fills
From crescent to the round. In the deep forests
Of the main Wanchese harangues his tribesmen
And lifts his arm to strike, but deviously.
He takes a ring, stripped from the finger
Of that man whose skull he split when once
He freed his island from the English, beats it
Out flat, and hangs it on the neck of one
He sends to barter skins and wampum.
This fellow knows his lesson: when a white man
Touches his trinket, he gives it up — a thing
Of little use — and tells of yellow
Stuff at the Occam's head common
As sand.

A score of men from Roanoke, impatient
Of the days which are to them each one
Like all, since each day's labor is the same —
These men, sleep-walking in a dream of gold,
Fit out their pinnace and at dawn push off
Into the slate-gray waters of the Occam.

This news
Makes Wanchese smile. He moves
His fingers down the sunken scar
Between his eyes, across the smashed bone
Of his nose: when he's angry the pain there
Makes him frantic.

The rest is sport.
He sets his ambush in a dozen coverts.

When the uppermost is passed the bowmen loose
Their arrows. Then the English turn
Downstream and meet the hail of death
Invisible.

Some few days after, Ananias,
Walking on the edge of Roanoke toward th' mainland,
Finds in his path a bloody mess
Of skin and hair.

These tokens of disaster
Bring back dreads the English had almost
Forgot. They see their colony anew,
Hung on this land's edge whence
An evil tide can wash them into death.
Their chief men con the lessons
Of the winter and the summer: how from war
And hunger they can shape the fate of Raleigh's
City. The harvest must be stored;
And they should make a stronger bond
With Manteo's tribe, to hold all goods
In common. They should be set, themselves
And their allies, where they may watch
For help from England, and the signal of their place
And need be given instantly. They must
Have ready access to the ships, not risk
Occasion or the loss of life through winter
Seas. The nearest anchorage to Roanoke
Is at the banks, and every breech from the Atlantic
Inward full of shallows and foul
Currents. But Manteo's island, Croatan,
Is open to the sea: the watchmen's station
Can be set close to the fort; and if the Spaniards
Come they'll meet each landing party
With the vantage of firm ground against the enemy
Sea-tossed.

The question 's put: the sagest
Voices of the colony say aye.

IV. THE GARDEN

The Sixth Day

The chill of autumn brings the time
Set for their change. Wanchese for skill
And custom will not risk assault: he knows
The bowstrings and the naked muscles of his fighters
Thick and unapt.

In the uncertain dawn,
When misty air and water seem to have
An equal denseness, palpable, the English
Gather at the little creek northward on Roanoke
To say farewell to those who've chosen first
To go to Croatan. The boat, their least
And last, gives room for Henry Berry;
The widow Viccars, who has taught her hands to weave
The mats and awnings for their houses; and Manteo,
Whose art will plan their city, Indian-wise
And simple: these with their goods and four men,
Sailor-guards, to bring the precious vessel
Back to Roanoke.

Eleanor and Ananias,
Shabedge and the rest, in heaviness return
To their familiar places; the sense of time
And change is on them. Mark Bennett
Waits a little by the creek to guess
At what this Roanoke has meant. He
Turns and makes his way into the forest,
Where the fog still drifts among the boles of oak
And poplar. He knows a copse Uwaara
Showed him once, a place where deer
Had bedded; the boy had made a sort of bow
And spread his hands out, so that Mark could take
The action for a kindness. Here, when the sun
Begins to light its bars of gold
Across the mist, Mark comes upon Uwaara
And Amosens. Red jealous anger
Hits him for a moment; then he sees
The book that Amosens holds in her lap.

She calls to Mark to sit beside them;
Uwaara, pointing first at Mark
Then at the book, says "you" and "here."
They laugh together while Mark takes
His place beside Uwaara. He tells them that the talking
In the book is his, the pictures are John White's.
For good or bad? Uwaara asks.

"For good," Mark says; "the story of the making
Of this earth, and beasts and th' men on it."

Uwaara 's pleased. He puts his hands
Together palm to palm, then rises
And is gone into the woods. Amosens looks down
And draws her furry cloak tighter
Around her. They are silent for a time,
While Mark is questioning his jealousy and its relief.
"I have no right in her," he says
Within himself, "yet I would keep her — and for what?
For dreams to feed on or for my sick fancy
To anatomize? She's flesh and blood
And members: a monster else. My finick
Taste has tricked me. Her image in my brain
Has told me every wakeful night
I love the shape life took in her."

The sun has drawn the mists into pure
Air; the oak leaves scatter lights
And shadows on them. "Amosens," Mark says,
"I hope you never know the fool's
And devil's thoughts that tease me. You're
The word for woman in each tongue:
Your meanings, the ideal and the substance, tripped me up."

When she turns to him, a little frown
Shows on her forehead. "Mark, did you read
The sign Uwaara made when he put
Hand on hand?"

"No, Amosens."

"You'd never set an ambush for me
With your words?"

"God knows I would not,
Amosens."

Her doubt is answered; she
Moves close to him and takes his hand
To hold the finger-ends against her lips.
The touch provokes a kind of desperation:
Her tender beauty, immediate on his hands
And eyes, comes to his brain distorted
By the press to take, almost to hurt it,
Or to hurt himself, to whet sensation
Fine, to be impaled on ecstasy. "This
Is a voice I have not heard before.
What wry-necked fiend speaks to me now?
Did my mother or my father breed me to such whispers,
That my blood should echo? The spirit feeds
Upon the moving unity of mind and sense
That we name beauty; are these effects
Concoction, a common, gross digestion
That must end in voiding, in the act? The parts
Are placed to mean it. And men use
Woman for a jakes? Dear God,
You would not make so fair a world,
The creatures in it fair, and curse it?
If I could know by thinking, if thought
Were means to ends, I'd follow still
Beyond the mid meridian of hell.
But sight and touch must cue this thinking
Or it ends in graceless logic, in a truth
Of terms, not truth to live on.
These factions in the houses of the brain
Cannot be fit; nor can the image
Of this woman aim at chaos. I'll
Work an answer to these if's and what's,
Or grant I'm cursed and turn the key
On thinking, call my brain a bawdyhouse,
And say that beauty is a pander, merely,
To my goatish senses."

Amosens has closed
Her eyes; she rests her head against him
Now as though she were asleep. Mark
Sees within the shadow of her cloak the sweet
Familiar shape. A tender exaltation
Lifts his spirit. The warm fact
Of her nearness, like a texture, laps his senses,
Flows and centers in the rapture of the hands
And eyes of love. There is no time,
No place beyond this now and here,
No splendor but the glory of the flesh, no treasure
But the half-closed eyes, the faintly swollen lips.
Here on the earth of Roanoke their bodies
Weave the primal pattern while their spirits
Crowd even to the edge of swooning, then
Sink over in a deep and nerveless quiet.

They watch the sunlight on the leaves that roof them;
Then they turn to see each other, new
Yet known, an image to be carried in the soul
Through all their days and nights. For Mark
The earth and all it holds have got
New truth from her: each leaf
Is an event; each needle, fallen from the pine
That bred it, takes its place, exact
And perfect; he hears the definite small
Talking of the woods; the air, deep-drawn
And pressing on his lungs, gives up an almost
Blood-sweet fragrance.

When Amosens stands up
Mark keeps his place to watch
The miracle of concord shadowed on her skin
By all the secret muscles' tensing.
Then he goes to her, and wordless
They hold close to catch again for each
For memory the pressure of the other. Amosens
Takes up her cloak. Before she goes
She puts her hand against Mark's arm
And strokes his sleeve a little, as though

Her senses asked a gentler touch
To poise the greater.

The Tree

Mark wanders to the shore. He stands
And stares across the Occam as it brings the rains
Of all the unknown mainland to the sea.
A small grief hovers at the edge
Of thinking, and he hears the question had he right
To take this girl from race and custom,
Or to use her love and body for delight?
"The act drew all my senses with it,
But was alien to the brain, which, like a man's
Who drowns, held only pictures. Now
I know what I have done. The heavy
After-thought beats on my soul like doom
To warrant that so high a tide in passion
Drains with a tragic undertow." And Mark
Rehearses to the Occam as it flows what
He has learned of hubris, deadly sins,
Weird damnings, furies.

"Mark?"
He turns and finds Uwaara at his side.
By signs and any words they share, the boy
Asks Mark to show the meaning
Of his book. Mark takes it, thinking
How he'd versed these parts of Genesis
When he had naught but iambs and pentameters
To worry for.

"The story of God's making
Earth and life, Uwaara; thus:
'Lord God hath counsel taken with Himself;
His thought doth move through Chaos puissantly.
Now Time beginneth; World is shapen round,
And Light doth show that Light and World are good.'
Then God made life, Uwaara; trees
And fish and birds and cattle — all,
He made. And at the last he fashioned man.
God rested then. (It may be he was weary

When he made us; I know not:
Perfection comprehends all qualities.)
When God had rested he made woman
Out of man and gave them to each other.
They were innocent: no rebel lust
To peer and sweat against God's gift
Of beauty: all innocent. (As innocent,
I'd almost said, as Amosens. But now?
I hardly know the weight of what I've
Done to her.) Then evil came, Uwaara:
' 'Gainst holy hest and for the woman's sake,
He evil did; thus evil knew, and good.'
(My quest lies here — is Adam's wisdom
Lost? Must each man break
His covenant and risk the damning of his soul
To get a meaning for this pair of words?
The words are empty; I have sounded
Them. The evil act has power;
And with Amosens —) Uwaara, take your book.
We'll talk another time. You've led me
To a door that I must open while there's light.

Dear father Adam, did you know my trouble
And the troubling beauty of the woman? Your wisdom
Pours upon me: lusting of the body
Gives effect to beauty, beauty
That can hallow lust until the senses crowd
Upon the soul to share in man's immortal
Part, the sovereign pleasure of the act
Be end not means, and we, being human,
Knowing good and ill, may take
What fruit we can, so we shake not
The tree of life. It is enough:
The eager tide of blood, the avid,
Trembling senses, beat against their confine;
More delight would kill us. Man
And woman make such bliss
Together that the angels, innocent in goodness,
Pause their flight to puzzle: devils,
Single-eyed for evil, bite themselves

In unsophisticated envy. This middle earth
Is man's fit ground: here
Sun and sea are rich in change;
Here we get joy or pain,
And as the senses and the brain may warrant, find
Our paradise on Roanoke."

Here, where
The waters of the Occam drift past Roanoke,
Mark puts his clothes off, wades
Until the current lifts him, then swims
Strong against it, taking in his hands
The good, resistant water, stroke
On stroke, and answering with his heat the chilly
Rain from all the unknown land ahead.

V. INDIAN SUMMER

Antiphony

Now comes the year's brief second summer,
That time in autumn when the weary sun
Is hot upon the earth again, but not to fructify.
The nights are fogged to guard the secret
And inevitable change.

On Croatan, Dick Shabedge
And his fellows dress their boat by lantern light.
This journey is the final going and return
To move the colony from Roanoke. The keel
Hisses on the sand, the waves shoulder
Their oaken freight, and a thin black
Wind catches at the sail to press them on
Toward Roanoke.

The dark is heavy on their eyes
And hides the score of war-canoes that soundless
Slip across the water, coming from the main
To meet the dawn at Croatan. To the Indian,
Summer's brief return gives time
For the abrupt and ending stroke while bow-string
And the killing arm have suppling heat.

When they have watched the sun halfway
Across the sky, these English in their pinnace come
To Roanoke. They pass the western coast
And put in at the creek, where Mark waits for them.
"What news?"

"None, Dick, save that we need
Your help to move our heavy goods."

"God gave me strength; have you
Tobacco? Give me some. It is
My only comfort. You are paired,
They tell me, you and Amosens, like woodland
Doves — "

"Yes, Dick."

" — 'Tis sweet to think on.
You've my blessing, gratis. She's such
A bride as most men wed in dreams.
Ah, well. I've snugged the wenches in my time.
David has slain his thousands, Saul
His tens of thousands. Stay here, boy.
Load the stuff that's ready; we'll
Fetch the boxes. You need your vigor
For another end than ours."

At the fort
They find all set in order for the heavy leaving;
Ananias helps them raise their burden
Shoulder high, then watches, as they go,
The boles of oak and pine come
One by one between to hide them.
Eleanor has read his sadness in the lifting
Of his head to meet the bitter mood.
She takes Virginia's hand to guide her
Toward him, and he lifts the child astride
His shoulder. Eleanor stands close,
Her luxury of hair against his cheek. "Look yonder,
Dear," she says; "a thin blue
Smoke hangs on our chimney. We

Struck that fire, and we let it die:
Our will 's to Croatan. You chose
To be the last from Roanoke, and I chose with you.
This is the acting hour that heats
The chill of grief with business."

"Come, then;
The word to guide your father must be cut
Against the doorpost of the fort. When that is done
We'll call for Amosens to bring Mark's goods,
And follow Shabedge to the Occam."

Now Wanchese and his host have compassed
What they went to Croatan to do.
The English and the Indians there have faced
The sudden end full of the fear
And rage of combat. Manteo has reached
The term of that new life he shaped
Out of strange loyalty — with him his people,
Killed or taken; of the English, none
Alive save Henry Berry, his wits
Gone with the blood an arrow cost him:
The gash on fire with the fever that leaves
A man his skill but blanks the tables
Of his memory.

Pressed by the thirst to slay
Till all be done, Wanchese has come
To Roanoke. His blood-marked hand
Points to the place where once before
He came to prove the white men subject
To the ways of flesh in lust and death.
Silent as the trees when no wind stirs,
He leads his band toward where the white men
Are. He sees Dick Shabedge with his helpers
Pass returning to the fort, and waits
Their burdened coming back. Then he'll strike
As quiet as an old man's death,
But in one instant.

The light of afternoon

Slants through the gateway of the fort and dwells
Like an amber tide of incense, resinous
And holy, on Eleanor's brown hair
And gentle face. She turns from looking
At the child asleep beside her to watch
A flock of birds that hurry from the north
With nervous calls to one another. While Ananias cuts
Into the doorpost the message that will speak for them
When John White comes, they talk together
Of the building of Raleigh's city for Elizabeth and England,
Of days and nights lived on this island
At the known world's edge, a rich
And simple texture of the seasons' rain
Or sun, of work and food and sleep.

"We'll stay here, Ananias — so we've planned —
When in God's time my father brings relief
And offers us a passage. Together we'll
Add up the years till we are old: a full life,
Ananias. England seems dim to me,
Except the yard in Devon. There are moments
That being thought on after many days can warm
The blood, and I have found a hundred such
On Roanoke to ten in England. The hazards
Crowd us nearer, but the terms are set,
And we'll not haggle."

Ananias stops
A moment in his work. "When you are close to me,
And I can feel the little muscles in your back,
Each one alive and part of your sweet body,
I know that I can carve a life for us,
Just as I cut these letters, full of meaning,
Yet not desperate. Then I see an eagle
Drop to the strike, or watch a buck
Die in the sand, his strength bled from him
Through a hole no bigger than a musket-ball,
And by an enemy he's never seen: then I know
That we are here, alive, and with each other,
Some part by chance, some part by skill,
And that the skill is naught against an evil chance."

Eleanor looks up at him and puts her hand out
To touch him. "We'll fend," she says, "as best
We may, though we're no wiser than the moth
That takes the candle for a little window to the sun."

"This much we know," and Ananias grips his knife
Again; "love is a benefit beyond the circumstance,
Beyond the pressure on the race to hold its numbers
Against time and death. This love I take to be
The brightest venture we can shape out of the stuff
Fate gives us. Here on this inch of earth,
This land's edge, Roanoke, we've worked and slept
So near that seldom has the touch been checked
By space between. Your meaning to me is the answer
To the evil chance. On you the uncertain mind can rest."

" 'Tis in our lesser moments, Ananias, that we seek
Meanings and answers; we need them then.
But in our greater times, and they come often
Here with you, the soul is full.
Now your word is done — in fair
Large letters, Croatan. Put down
Your knife and take me in your arms.
There is no need to make the cross,
The token that we leave this Roanoke distressed."

Wanchese has paused, and lets his fingers
Stroke the sunken scar between his eyes. He fits
The wand against the bowstring and pulls it to the head.
Death strikes in throat and temple,
And the life 's soon spilled. Now evening
Comes to meet with sea and land.

Creed

The shadow of the oak across his work has lost
Its edge when Mark looks up again
To see the empty path. The native darkness
Of the earth past roots and fallen leaves
Flows up and lies along the ground.

Then
Mark hears a little sound like wind:
Swift from the whispering forest Amosens
Runs to him. He takes his gun,
Looks past her for pursuit, and leaps
To meet her. The hard-drawn breath checks
Speech, but in her eyes disaster 's open.

"Killed, Mark, killed. Eleanor,
Ananias."

'Killed' echoes in his brain,
And on his face her breath is hot as blood.

"Uwaara took Virginia. He cursed
Wanchese and took her. All the men
Are killed."

Mark presses by her
To the path, but she holds fast his arm
With all her tired strength. "Mark,
Don't. They're dead."

"I made this venture
With them. I'll share its end." He takes
Her close to get a final certainty.
But Amosens puts both her hands
Against him and steps back.

"Fools,
Fools. You Englishmen are fools. You
Look for death."

Suddenly, Uwaara
Stands with them, and in his arms Virginia.
This proof hits like a blow; a dizziness
Comes up behind his eyes, then clears,
And he can feel this time and place,
The child, Uwaara, Amosens, himself,
Fixed on his brain, even to the pressure
Of his clothes against his body. His days on Roanoke,

His love for Amosens, are like a story someone else
Has told, particular and distant. There 's no
Familiar: Mark Bennett is a stranger's name.
The desperate loneliness makes life
Or death no matter.

When he speaks his voice
Is gentle. "Amosens, it's in our hands to make
Pain brief. Uwaara's skill
Can find your way to Croatan; I'd make
A target of you."

He gives his mission
To Uwaara. The boy stares back at him,
Then kneels and sets Virginia on the ground.
The loss and slaughter he must tell from Croatan
Strike hard at Amosens. She bows herself
Against the earth and puts her grief into the rote-words
Of her people.

Mark looks about him
At the broken pattern of their lives. "This
Is the bias end we've come to: a laden
Pinnace and no crew; our friends
And kin dead in mid-project, the bowstring
Cut half-drawn. What does God
Say to this?"

In the day's last
Light Mark turns to Amosens
To comfort her. He feels himself at loss:
No speech is ready, and his purpose hitherto
Now seems obscure and motive-crossed.
He kneels and puts his hand on her
And strokes her shoulders. Half-sensing,
With his fingers he describes the little nodes
Along her backbone; quaint, touched
By one and one, yet neatly common
To the faring of her spirits. Mark's thought
Comes round to what his fingers
Have. "This is her way of life,

Whence the quick sinews take
Their motion, bone corded into bone
In subtle enginry, not rare,
For every deer and dog, Wanchese himself,
Has the device, this *via vitae,*
Head to tail. It is a magic
Death falls short of, though his universal
Quiet rotting 's shrewd enough.
He has his part in us: we
Use him in our feeding, and we hold
A glass to him when in an enemy
He scowls at us; he takes us,
Late or soon, but while we can
We force his service to the deeper
Miracle. To make a breech for death
At the mere call of bugle honor
Shows, I think, high treason.
There 's statecraft closer to the way of life."

Mark's fingers trace again
The pattern of her backbone. "Amosens," he says,
"We've lost our friends and kin. You know
What risks go with me in your land;"
He lifts her up and through the crowding night
Looks at her face; "if you will meet them
We can find the means to live
Our time together."

A river wind
Stirs in the trees above them, and little ranks
Of waves slap flatly on the pinnace.

Amosens takes breath deep
In her lungs and slowly lets it go.
Her spirits quicken, and she turns
To ask Uwaara's help into a place
Which holds no studied hate.

Uwaara gives his wallet of crushed corn
To Amosens; while she stirs up cold
Comfort for Virginia's hunger, he

Tells Mark to leave the English
Boat here in its place to show
Wanchese at sun-up that the killing 's done.
They'll go in his canoe, but first —
He pulls Mark's shirt and makes him understand
To take it off, he digs mud from the creek-bank
Where it's steep and with his hands paints out the hazard
Of Mark's skin. The Occam 's wide,
And if Mark draws his hair down on his cheeks
He'll get past danger into Moratuc,
Whose waters feed the Occam southward.

Amosens takes up Virginia on her back
And waits for Mark to save what tools
And foodstuff he can gather from the pinnace.
Uwaara furrows up the soft bank
Where they've stood and bids Mark
Trample on it with his boots. Then he leads them
By dark ways into the darker forest.

The long night has only water-sounds,
The brittle drip from paddles and a thin
River-note against the prow. Light comes up
Behind them, and they are alone.

Uwaara
Calls a resting-time, and Mark lays down
His paddle in the bow and turns to look
Across the Occam at the distant place they've quit
By darkness. Through the morning, Roanoke seems
To him like the image of an island intricately
Carved in wood, traced with the colors
Of an emerald in shadow and of walnut intimately
Known, a timely place of forms
And colors proof against the change that strikes
All breathing things. There
Time ended for his friends; flies
Have begun to buzz against them now;
And south on Croatan the tainted air
Calls buzzards.

"What salt
Has kept me sound? No cortegiano
Virtue, but events chance-patterned
At the crux, mere weather-logic
That we darkly read and press for cure
By any dodges studied out of pain and death.
Only the earth can physic us:
We are cadets and owe seniority
To grass and trees; the ruggy creatures
Are our elders. We have not kept our place:
Ambition out of kind has puffed us
Till a brain-spun creed can buy
Our birthright. The heraldry of things is honest,
Though it lacks that ticklish honor of the fool
Who in his niceness makes himself
Earth's bastard."

Mark sees
That Amosens is watching him. She smiles
And moves Virginia to an easier rest
Against her lap. There is a mist of dawn-light
On her, but he cannot leave his place
To go to her. "I could believe
She is the source of spring, or swear
Perspective 's in the eye because she walks,
Or hold that trees have leaves to bed her."
He sets his hands at work again
To pull against the river. "Some thousand thousand
Strokes before we reach our place. (I'm sorry
For poor beasts that wait on season for their tailing.)
We have no warrant for our peace when we are there
But health and increment of wisdom from defeat.
I could have made a safer world
For her to live in (an honest beauty
Does not need the gust of danger:
That's for stale maids-in-waiting dawdling
To be thumbed on dark backstairs), yet
We have room for exaltation here.
The utmost reach and backbone of our thrift
Is in the body's need and sense; we're blest

Up to our scope, and being so
Are wholly blest."

Grace for Sun and Earth

The sun pours down
Its glory on the distant trees, deep-rooted
In the earth. Ahead, the changing, changeless
River levels to the edge, resistant
To their will, but possible. The essential world
Beats through his blood in spiral harmony
And choirs in his heart. Thanksgiving presses
In his throat and on his lips. He lifts his head
And whispers:

"You, unhearing waters;
Bright, blind sun; you,
Ancient, kind, insenate earth —
Your living creature says his grace."

TO A CROCUS

Welcome, tender little flower,
Harbinger of Spring,
Child of April's shower,
Fragile, gentle thing.

Popping out your dainty head,
Looking at us bright,
Crawling out of wintry bed,
Tell us Spring's in sight.

Erich Hardt

SILVER DAUGHTER OF THE PURITANS

Winifred Welles of Norwich Town

By GEORGE BRANDON SAUL

Despite what promises to be her increasing significance in the history of American poetry, little is generally known concerning Winifred Welles; consequently, a brief biographical sketch[1] may legitimately serve as prelude to a consideration of her poetry.

I.

The daughter of James Howard and Mary Wait Welles, Winifred Welles was born in Norwich Town, Connecticut, 26 January, 1893. Her father (who died in 1906, preceding her mother by almost seven years) was cashier of the Uncas (now the Uncas-Merchants) bank; her maternal grandfather was John Turner Wait, one-time Congressman from Connecticut, a distinguished lawyer-politician with honorary degrees from Trinity, Harvard, and Yale. In the Wait home, 71 Town Street, the flaxen-haired girl (who, despite violent attacks of asthma,[2] is said to have been something of a tomboy) grew into maturity, doubtless dreaming occasionally (one recalls her essay, *Connecticut Attic*) of remote forebears like Dr. Philip Turner, once assistant surgeon under General Amherst and subsequently a surgeon general for the American Revolutionary forces.—Incidentally, another notable relative was her paternal grandfather's brother, Gideon Welles, Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy.

Always, according to a personal friend, "a gifted, fascinating girl, never very strong," Miss Welles began her

[1]For which former friends of the poet — including Mrs. John P. Huntington, Mrs. Frederick Sayles, Mrs. Grosvenor Ely, Mrs. Albert Hunt Chase, and Miss Louise C. Howe, all of Norwich; and the poet Amanda Hall (Brownell), of New London — have graciously contributed some information. For generous miscellaneous aid, I wish also to thank Miss Elsie G. Marsh, of the library of the University of Connecticut, and Miss Eleanor Rogers, a student of mine; for permission to reprint material from Winifred Welles's books, I am indebted to the kindness of the Viking Press (N. Y.)

[2]Which once led to suspicion of tuberculosis and a sojourn at Saranac.

education locally at a private school on North Washington Street run by the Misses Blackman (who appear under the designation of "the Lucae"—"Cynthia and Arabella Lucas" — in the essay *Lessons*), later studying at Miss Hall's school in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. In September of 1915, according to information received from the Registrar, she registered at Barnard College "as a non-matriculated special student", living in the dormitory at 116th Street and Broadway and taking "two courses in English literature and a course in Ethics", but completing none, inasmuch as she left "before the end of the term in January". Information concerning her immediately subsequent career appears to be somewhat scanty.

In 1920 Miss Welles worked in New York reading material "that might make good 'movies' ": a personal letter of this period speaks of her unhappiness in this work and — a trifle youthfully! — of "great gaps and enormous hungers and an eternally parched soul." Meanwhile her friend Lawrence Gilman, who used to summer in Norwich Town, had apparently helped "float" her as a poet; and on 4 December, 1920, Mr. Christopher Morley included her (as right halfback!) in his "Bowling Green's All-Star poetical eleven." Her first volume, *The Hesitant Heart,* had appeared in 1919; its successors are listed in the discussion that follows.

On 3 September, 1921, at the Little Church around the Corner, New York, Miss Welles married Harold H. Shearer, a telephone engineer trained at the University of Michigan, who had served as a lieutenant-colonel with the Signal Corps in France during the first "Great War", and who was to die of cancer in 1938, at the age of fifty-two. This marriage led to the birth of the child James W., to whom his devoted mother, in an essay entitled *The Henry Clay Slip Covers,* refers as a "thin, scholarly, ascetic boy who dislikes changes, innovations, or any variation of routine."

According to Miss Louise Townsend Nicholl, writing in a 1940 spring "flyer" on children's books issued by Dutton, of New York, Miss Welles lived in "lower New York" — my own notes list 38 and 50 West 9th Street — "for the first dozen or more years of her marriage." Subsequently she lived at 23 Montrose Street, Scarsdale, before coming to

Darien, Connecticut, to build a house — finished just before her husband's death. At Darien she herself died on 22 November, 1939. According to Miss Nicholl, the last book she proof-read was *The Park That Spring Forgot* (a children's book of, unfortunately, minor significance), written "in the last sad and difficult year of her life, after her husband's death" — a year of ill health during which she also began a novel and worked on short stories. One also learns from Miss Nicholl that "a book of her children's verse was left ready to be published."

For the rest, the present writer can add only that Miss Welles was a member of the Poetry Society of America and an associate member of the Hartford Poetry Club; that she served on the editorial board of *The Measure* during the early 1920's; that she received a "Friends of American Writers" prize in 1929; and that she is said to have disliked crowds, to have had an unconventional approach to religion, and to have commanded a sometimes spicy wit. All her friends seem to agree on the charm of this tragically short-lived girl of the striking blue eyes, the gold-lighted ash hair, and the "soft, slow way of speaking." As Miss Nicholl sums up, in the article already referred to, "There was about her a kind of delicacy and fineness — of breeding, of environment, of mind, perceptions and relationships — which seldom comes into the experience of any of us. Her humor, too, was rare . . . Her own laugh was a kind of silent convulsion."

And now to consider her poetry.

As previously stated, Miss Welles began book-publication in 1919 with *The Hesitant Heart* (N. Y.: Huebsch), a slight volume of forty-five lyrics which none of her admirers would lose, though it can hardly stand with her finest two volumes. It is a book that appeals in part because of its combination of a delicate reticence with a sort of "hesitant" courage; it is, like practically all its author's work, extremely musical, and it reflects a clear intelligence, though it is not lacking in a vague tendency toward the sentimental, as its query anent the robin, in "The Unfaithful April," suggests:

> How can he sing with old wounds
> Still red upon his breast?

The poet makes no claim to notice here as an experimenter;

she opens no new ground; but in recultivating an acre already long worked, she manages to garner a surprising amount of grain from old land. It is, naturally, a young woman's response to life that she reveals here, but a response tinctured with unusual feminine subtlety. Her "hesitant" heart can show dreadful awareness — as in "Cobweb," with its spider — analogue of love, wherein that heart

> grows still
> And cries that Love is lovely — isn't it?

But there is always grace, whether the poet is concerned with the way of humans with their dead ("Humiliation"), with love as agony ("Gesture"), or with nothing more disturbing than "A Tree at Dusk":

> With secrets in their eyes the blue-winged Hours
> Rustle through the meadow
> Dropping shadow.

— And it is worth observing that — a very New Englander in this — Miss Welles turns to trees more than once for her symbolism.

The Hesitant Heart contains an unusual number of sonnets for a first volume; regarded as an entity, it is to be adjudged a quiet, competent book — a book suggesting the break of first sure love over a woman's heart; a book not devoid of artistic assurance —

> Wings? Oh, not for me, I need no other pinions
> Than the beating of my heart within my breast;

and a book whose finest lyric, "Love Song from New England,"— reflects the contemporary inheritor of Puritan traditions at her best and most charming:

> In every solemn tree the wind
> Has rung a little lonesome bell,
> As sweet and clear, as cool and kind
> As my voice bidding you farewell.
>
> This is an hour that gods have loved
> To snatch with bare, bright hands and hold.
> Mine, with a gesture, grey and gloved,
> Dismiss it from me in the cold.
>
> Closely as some dark-shuttered house
> I keep my light. How should you know,
> That as you turn beneath brown boughs,
> My heart is breaking in the snow?

Ten years separated *The Hesitant Heart* from its immediate successor, *This Delicate Love* (N. Y.: Viking), years that brought a quietly achieved maturity, an unfolding — but never boisterous — sense of humor, and an exquisite perfection of artistry. "Actual Willow," the opening poem, asserting

to-day
The actual willow, the fact of a tree,
Is fanciful and beautiful enough for me,

is the sign of a turning-point both in woman and in the romantic imagination; such poems as "Trophies and Nosegays" ("Women are good at growing adjectives"), "Trinket," "Ungentle Threat," and particularly "From an Old, Old Castle" are warm with gentle laughter; and the fact the volume is quotable at large is sufficient testimony to its author's artistic achievement. (Incidentally, one lyric, "Camels on Lexington," had a forerunner in a personal poem sent to a Norwich friend in 1920, and beginning

I saw two camels in my street
At dusk . . .)

Appropriately enough, Miss Welles favors the word "delicate" and confesses ("A Child's Drawing of a Cobweb") her love of

The silvery vein, the fine-spun nerve,
The silken bone of some frail beauty's image.

More than one of these poems seem, to recall the title of a fragile example, "Hammered Out of Mist." At the same time the author is quite aware of the satyr always hidden behind the leaves of Nature including human nature (*cf.* "Feast in the Forest," which tells a sad little tale by means of delicately tragic suggestion only); she knows that

being young
Is being hurt

and that

being innnocent is only
Being locked out,

though one should add that ordinarily her readings of life are

implicit rather than crystallized; and she has moments of half-sardonic rebellion, as in "Witch's Return to Earth," with its flight from monotonously perfect Heaven

> To steely twilight in some autumn marsh,
> Where God is witty and grotesque and harsh.

But though she can mock at time and fate, the raillery is not vigorous; she is more in character while stroking her "Driftwood Harp," through whose

> gold bones still was heard
> The sorrow of a great lost bird,

or while whispering of the fragility, beauty, and uncertainty of love — as in "Bubble." For it is poems like this last — poems like "Silver for Midas," or "Blue Pool, or "Consecration," or "Cliffs" (that record of intended suicide — leading to an exhilarating response to life! —

> So now I know I can dare to love
> As long as I love to dive.)

or "Winter Apples," or "Harvest Dust" — that give this book of fifty-seven lyrics its individual character. Let me quote the two last named.

WINTER APPLES

Not in a valley ivoried with grain,
  Where wheat is stacked in golden fountain-shapes,
Nor in some vineyard when an opal rain
  Chips off the amethyst and amber grapes.

But in that orchard on its hill of stones,
  Where, rustily, the heavy leaves are pinned
To hollow stems, and, worn to creaking bones,
  Boughs are like fingers scratching on the wind.

Here, less a woman than a moon-eyed witch,
  In this most bitter place for fruit Love stands
Stooping where apples turn the black frost rich,
  To lift one like a lantern in her hands.

HARVEST DUST

The road is burnt to dust, like more dust meadow rue
  Smokes in the meadow; berries are balanced to fall
At a cowbell's echo; apples will soon be over and nothing left to do
  For the trees but to crook their elbows on the wall.

In the farmhouse doorway a woman, husking corn,
  Droops to where softer than children's hair, a yellow heap

Of the silk fondles her hand; under her eyes her face is as worn
As the stone steps where she sits and has fallen asleep.

What is it all for? Why must the earth crack
Over and over beneath this searing breath?
Only that apples be embers and berries black,
And women content and wearied unto death.

— As these poems would suggest, *This Delicate Love* is not a book of furious despairs and ecstasies, but one of gentle — yet pliant and experientially rich — loveliness, arguing, perhaps, no more delicate harp or more charming music in contemporary American poetry. And — despite its author's reputed enthusiasm for Emily Dickinson (who seems to me to have stimulated nothing here except perhaps a few mild audacities) — it is a book seldom reminiscent of other poets: one may think momentarily of Edna Millay when, in "Indian Pipes," one chances on the line

When she comes singing to the wood's edge;

of Yeats when finding in "The Driftwood Harp,"

We had
Little wisdom to make us sad;

but the only other poet to come to one reader's mind with any assurance is Elinor Wylie, the friend with whom Miss Welles appears to have shared certain gifts, and the friend whose death is said to have cut her deeply: at least, "To Poets" is curiously suggestive of the Wylie mode, and certain other lyrics — *e. g.*, "Hunting Dogs," which, incidentally, presents an anomaly common to both humans and beasts in suggesting the difficulty of believing that quiescent gentleness can ever flame into blood-lust — articulate a music similar in perfect tonal quality to the sort produced by Mrs. Wylie in some of her best work, though never crackling into the brittleness often characteristic of Mrs. Wylie at her less distinguished.

In brief, *This Delicate Love* (which shows a less-marked interest in sonneteering than was evident in its predecessor) must be counted with *Blossoming Antlers* (N. Y.: Viking, 1933) as representative of Miss Welles's best work. It offers a fair variety of verse-forms, all fundamentally simple; its originality consists neither in technical innovation nor in startling figure, but in its reflection of the exquisitely delicate

personal conception — the half-shadowy evocation of silvery, fragile harmonies — the gently graceful readings of a woman's heart, at once whimsical and sensitive to the insecurity even in seemingly secure love:

> You are the silver-bodied waterfall
> That comes between the world and me —
> For all that anyone can see
> I might be mist against a wall,
> Caught to your heart, housed safe in you,
> But oh, Belovéd, in what danger too!

Blossoming Antlers, a collection of forty-four poems arranged in four groups (as the poems in *This Delicate Love* had been arranged in four groups), not only has the fastidious daintiness and charm always characteristic of its author's best work, but also argues a new reach — a new imaginative unleashing: consider "God's First Creature Was Light", a poem not unworthy Blake[3], and a poem in which the very quietness of the verse alone moderates the terror of the third and fourth lines:

> From dark the striped muscles sprang,
> The lion mane, the spotted foot.
> Across the dark was gently put
> The lengthening and hungry fang.
>
> Onto the open firmament,
> With each black star a stepping stone,
> Fierce, supple, silent and alone,
> Light, the first creature, softly went.

Here, as occasionally elsewhere, Miss Welles's conception almost verges on the sinister: even sleep can mold a body into a "Design for a Blade"!

On the whole, however, *Blossoming Antlers* seems warmer, more obviously rooted in earth, than any of its author's other books; there is less of the withdrawn, of the subtly evasive, about it. As before, Miss Welles maintains her own integrity and personality, but a human summer begins glowing here. The very titles of this "Solitary Figure" "still . . . gentle . . . light-hearted," "with grave eyes and soft hair straightly parted," as she describes herself—have more than a suggestion of humanity about them: one thinks of poems

[3]Among some of Miss Welles's MSS. I have been privileged to see are copies in longhand of **The Clod and the Pebble, A Poison Tree,** and **Ah, Sunflower.**

like "Orchards on Fire" (with its downhill "rush" of trees in spring), "Nosegay for a Young Goat," "Cider for the Brown Bull," "Lines to a Lady in Litchfield County" (which, with its white horses pondering a house in moonlight, has just a suggestion of de la Mare's magic about it), "The Orchard in the Mirror," "Still September," "Immaculate Task," etc. "Immaculate Task," which is Robert Frost with a difference, demands question:

Late in the leafless fall,
A boy rebuilt my wall.
He came each morning early,
And soundlessly he crossed
Lawns glassy still with frost,
In light still sharp and pearly.

Devoutly and alone,
He bent to each grey stone.
His hands precisely, gravely,
He used with serious care.
Afloat on that clear air,
His breath was frail and lovely.

No one should build a wall
Except a boy in fall,
Who comes at dawn austerely,
Faint scarlet on his cheek,
Who does not like to speak,
Who loves a hard rock dearly.

— One may add that "Twanging Gold," the second section of *Blossoming Antlers,* is, with its animals and blackberries, particularly compact of Miss Welles's response to the Connecticut countryside.

There are, again, in this volume, a few signs arguing spiritual kinship with Elinor Wylie: *e. g.,* "Thick Smoke" and the exquisite "Knight's Resemblance," immaculately, coolly deft in phrase. But it is perhaps more important to notice the personal gift for etching (with overtones), as in "Whistling Oarsman"; the increased — and half-fearful — awareness of mystery, as in "Queer Premonition"; the individuality of figure (Sleep is the "Merciful Medusa" turning all creatures to "grateful stone"); the closeness of observation (as where the horse's feet, in "Homely Hymn," "Splash up bright wings").

The book closes with "Panels for a Pine Room," four brief narratives, admirably well done, of Puritan subject-matter and concerned with women; of these, none is more

sure in touching the pathos of lonely humanity than "Mortal Dwelling," with Lucinda waking one night to find the plaster in her old house crumbling with a tragic significance:

> The moonlight whitened.
> Alone, Lucinda stood with death,
> Helpless and poor and old and frightened.

— Only a New Englander, perhaps, could have written these four; could, more specifically, have mustered the approving humor apparent in "Death of a Gentlewoman" and "Miss Calkins and the Centaur" — this last an especially effective, and appropriately grim, ballad concerning a spinster who, while berrying, had to save her virginity from a centaur by the efficient use of a pair of shears! These tales undoubtedly sign Miss Welles's growing interest in narrative, leading to *A Spectacle for Scholars,* though infinitely better than anything in that volume. Since her essential gift was lyric, the most natural and obvious channel for it in narrative writing was the ballad form.

Blossoming Antlers had been preceded by *Skipping Along Alone* (N. Y.: Macmillan, 1931; illustrations by Marguerite Davis), a collection of thirty-five pieces which represent pleasantly competent but undistinguished children's verse — verse, incidentally, which is for the most part closer to Stevenson than to de la Mare, though the best of the pieces (which are characteristically frequent in their use of the word "silver") are those closest to the latter. Evidence for this statement may be found in "Green Moth," "Fireflies," "Minim and the Two Mice," and "Hoppergrass: His Funeral" — this last (concerning a grasshopper who, too "impulsive" even to wait for burial, hopped off into heaven in the midst of his funeral service) the most clearly humorous of all.

A Spectacle for Scholars (N. Y.: Viking, 1935), which appeared four years before Miss Welles's death, must regrettably be labelled one of her least successful volumes; its four narratives — despite simple fable and uncomplicated development in each case — appear oddly verbose and somehow "made" rather than driven into expression: indeed, the author's own attitude seems curiously mild — almost de-

detached. And there are sad slips — sometimes in mere English:

> There lay upon them such a strange,
> Indecent, intimate a change;
>
> Since all their other children heretofore
> Were paper pamphlets —

sometimes in rhymes ("translucence"/"silence"; "brush"/ "marsh"/ "rush") — once even in the logic of biology:

> The Reverend Phineas Greene conceived a son!

As for content — in "Abigail" the scholarly and "Fiercely virginal, proud and strong" Miss Penfold has "some soundless evil" enter her, changing her hands! Thereafter she wears gloves at supper, dozes by the library fire, and eventually has a neurotic seizure, apparently trying *to get away from* her hands, which her own dogs mangle, leaving her barely alive! "The Flood," most readable of all, suggests something of the Eighteenth Century approach with its five-beat couplets, its poise and half-amused sophistication; it tells of old Miss Leffingwell, ex-schoolteacher, who,

> as obstinate with a flood
> As any other uninvited guest,

stubbornly sticks to her house and finishes her "history of the state" — fortunately finding both the house —

> Some slow intelligence
> Builds in old houses —

resistant to the flood and the waters observant of the stairhead limit she'd set for them to reach before she'd consider leaving! The title-piece concerns Lemuel Greene, who, striving to create a new language, founders on a verb to express "to be," eventually goes mad, implores a scarecrow for the secret, and is later found drowned in the river — a "spectacle for scholars." "Parson and the Lone Green Fay," finally, seems an indeterminate and — in a sense — an unfinished thing. Herein Parson Perkins, blessedly cursed with a household of nine women, who innocently interfere with his impulse to write verse (he has a talent for the satiric), discovers a strange old door in his cellar, opening on a tunnel

leading to a charmingly fantastic refuge-chamber underground: here he one day drowses — and sees a fay on awakening. The tale closes with the parson weeping, content, determined to stay, and falling "upon his knees before the Fay."

A Spectacle for Scholars is metrically various and charming enough in spots; why it fails is difficult to say beyond remarking that three of these four satiric tales ("The Flood" is a mild exception) are essentially insignificant and lacking in point either as tales or as satires. One remains convinced that Miss Welles's gift was essentially lyric.

But that gift was no small one. *This Delicate Love* and *Blossoming Antlers* are volumes any poet might be proud of, volumes no anthologist of early Twentieth Century poetry can ever afford to pass by unless he mistakes unpretentiousness and gentleness of tone for lack of quality. For here a lucid feminine intelligence nourishes itself on quiet humor and cultivates a music fastidiously delicate in kind. The marvel, indeed, may seem to be that "lyrical cry" in these volumes is not stifled by the control and poise of innate breeding; the truth is that breeding here finds subtly its own "lyrical cry." And the result is that this "silver daughter" of a Puritan tradition (to adapt a title of hers) indubitably takes rank not only as the finest poet Connecticut has yet given America, but also as one of the most exquisite poets America has given the world. And the harp is her instrument and symbol.

VALLEY SLUMBER SONG

Lullabye — lullabye —
Crickets are chirping,
Soft mists drifting,
Lifting and drifting —
Green in the growing corn,
Calm is the starlight —
Golden the coming morn,
Quiet the valley.

Lucy A. K. Adee

GANDOLFO

By GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND

In John Gandolfo's patio, palm-trees sway,
A-murmur with lazy trade-winds, whispering
Of coral keys and Spanish Main. They say —
"Long, long ago we heard sea-rovers sing;
Once saw the Jolly Roger flying! Gay, right gay
Was that dim-distant day
When *High Emprise* was King!"

In John Gandolfo's patio, flowering vines
Weave gold-bright shadows. There, a crimson flame,
Hibiscus burns, and trumpet-blossom twines.
There Morgan's you shall hear, and Blackbeard's name;
See Spanish jars, whence buccaneers of fame
(Laden of spoil from Hispaniola's mines)
With bearded lips that knew nor pity, fear nor shame,
Once quaffed rare wines.

And John Gandolfo, old and thin — how old! —
With patriarch silken hair, beard of spun snow,
Will tell grim tales of blood-won pirate gold,
And Brethren of the Main.
"... This much I know,
They buried loot on Loggerhead. It's told
There's ghosts still go
Down yon, and revels hold."

Gandolfo's hand shakes, veined and corded. Feeble-eyed
He squints in tropic sun-glare, as he shows
His precious dunnage-bag.
"... An' when that pirate died,
He give this here to gran'sire, with his clothes.
Ye see the island, sir? Ain't *no* one can decide
Exackly how them there directions goes,
But I suppose
This cross marks where them pirate treasures bide."

On faded, thread-worn canvas, still you see

The rover's chart, with scrawlings crude and pale.
". . . This here's some rocks, sir. Here's a marshy swale.
Them there's two palms, an' that's the treasure-tree!
Then, here's some writin', if my eyes don't fail —
'Pieces of eight, in wine-casks.' Think you it might be
Some day, perhaps, I'll find that Pirate Key?
Sometime get strong enough to h'ist my sail
One more last time to sea? . . ."

In John Gandolfo's patio, palm-trees sway,
Green rustling in soft sea-winds; whispering
Of silver beach and Spanish Main. They say —
"Ho, picaroons, right bravely did ye sing!
Well we remember how proud Dons, in satins gay,
Went Death's dark way
When *High Emprise* was King! . . ."

INTERFERENCE

Why must your eyes always get
Between me and the one I'd see?
You are always, always there.
Is this my Eternity?

I look up into what I think
Will surely be an endless space,
But forever in the distance
Is your face.

I raise my eyes for comfort, just
To go the weary second mile;
But always when I look for strength
It's intercepted by your smile.

Why must your eyes always shine
Through things that I would best forget . . .
Why can't they leave me to myself?
My darling . . . I am yours . . . yours yet.

— *Maryon Langbell*

SHAKESPEARE AND THE SPEAKING LINE

By LEWIS WORTHINGTON SMITH

I.

Lovers of poetry must be distressed many times by the way in which it comes in over the radio. That there is gaiety and lilt in poetry as the poets think it and feel it and write it seems to be something quite outside the apprehension of most of those who give it words in broadcasting. For them, by their manner of reading it, poetry is something tragic, melancholy, painfully sentimental. Their voices go up and down, up and down, up and down — some of them, of course — apologies to the others — in a monotonous regularity of undifferentiated sound. There is almost no response to the varying moods of the poetry. It does not walk easily now, move slowly now in meditation, and then run in exultation, in mounting joy, in spiritual abandon. What would such readers do, say, with the Cavalier poets, with, for instance, Suckling's *Ballad Upon a Wedding*, or Herrick's *Corinna's Going a Maying?*

Perhaps it may be said that Cavalier poetry was written for an audience of those who sit with book in hand and not for an audience of those who listen. If it was meant for those who would make the music of the lines for themselves, there is one form of poetry that we can recognize as having been written indisputably for listeners. That is the poetic drama as intended for presentation on the stage.

The development of blank verse as a medium for the play is an interesting part of literary history. It began with Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, as an adaptation from the Italian terza rima. This verse takes its name from the management of the rhymes, an interwoven series of three lines rhyming by alternation. What was carried over into English use, however, was not the rhyming system, but the iambic pentameter line itself unrhymed. Sismondi in his *Literature of the South of Europe,* writing of Frederick II (1194-1250) of Sicily and other poets of his time and place, says:

> The form of their versification was modeled upon that of the Provencals, or, perhaps, derived its origin from the same source as the latter. The verse was determined, not by the quantity, but by the accent of the syllables, and was always rhymed. Of all the feet employed by the ancients in the combination of syllables of different quantity, the iambic alone still continued in use; five of them being comprised in the heroic verse, and three or four in verses of a shorter measure. In the former, ten syllables were thus contained, exclusive of the mute; of which the fourth, the eighth, and the tenth, or the sixth and the tenth, were accented.

This recognition of the accentual importance of these syllables has a history of several hundred years. It has been given some attention since the time of these Sicilian poets, but application of the metrical principle involved is yet to be made in any sufficiently complete fashion as furnishing further evidence for the dating of Shakespeare's plays. It is to be hoped that it will be more fully developed some day. This discussion of the subject is meant to contribute toward that end as a possibility. Tennyson looked into the question of the proper alternation of the primary and the secondary accents in blank verse. So much will be seen by implication in the lines quoted further on. In a five-foot line there should normally be five accented syllables. The accented syllables that Sismondi names are consequently those to be considered as having primary stresses, while the other accented syllables in the line have secondary stresses.

At the time of the first employment of blank verse in English poetry the immediately preceding period had been prevailingly lyrical. In the main dramatic verse should not be lyrical. The poets who began using blank verse for the Elizabethan stage had therefore been disciplined in the use of lyrical verse. The transference or transformation of that skill into skill in the making of dramatic blank verse was not and could not be immediate.

One fundamental law for good dramatic verse is that the stresses in the lines shall be such as will retain the line as a rhythmic unit as in a flow of sound and shall at the same time escape the sense of rhythmic artifice. That is, it shall achieve the emotional end of rhythm and disguise the means. For that purpose the pause at the end of the line should come naturally. The final word in the line, more properly the final syllable, should have a heavy stress. In keeping with this general consideration, the second half of the iambic

pentameter line, the normal line of blank verse, should be more heavily weighted than the first half. The division of the five stresses of such a line into its primary and secondary stresses would make the ideal dramatic line one with the primary stresses on the second, fourth, and fifth of the stresses, that is, in a normal line, on syllables four, eight, and ten. The next most dramatically effective line will be one having the primary stresses on the sixth and tenth syllables, with the secondary stresses on the second, fourth, and eighth syllables. This numbering assumes normal iambic lines of ten syllables.

With a particular different arrangement of the primary stresses the iambic pentameter line becomes lyrical. One of the most interesting and fitting illustrations of that use is to be seen in Tennyson's lines *To The Queen* at the close of *The Idylls of the King*. I give several opening lines with the primary stresses marked.

O lóyal to the róyal in thysélf,
And lóyal to the lánd, as this to thée —
Bear wítness, that remémberable dáy,
When, pále as yet, and féver-worn, the Prínce
Who scárce had plucked his flíckering life agáin
From halfway down the shadow of the grave,
Past wíth thee thro' thy peóple and their lóve.

The dedication goes on in this singing fashion with primary stresses on syllables, two, six, and ten, and it is hardly to be questioned that Tennyson used this form consciously and deliberately. The first poets to employ blank verse for the drama also fell into this run of stresses, not by the artist's achieving attention, but through his failure to control the new medium. Some years ago Clayton Hamilton remarked to me that writing blank verse was easy. I agreed, and very foolishly I failed to add that writing good blank verse was not so easy. It has been widely understood that good blank verse was really Shakespeare's achievement following in the steps of Marlowe.

Some years ago two of my students working with me at Drake university canvassed some portion of Shakespeare's plays with relation to his management of primary and secondary stresses. Both students had written poetry and had a feeling for rhythm. The results of their work revealed

a pronounced increase in what I call the dramatic line as against a decrease in the lyrical lines having the primary stresses, as already indicated, on syllables two, six, and ten. This was determined in the first place by taking a play known by external evidence to be an early play and then examining one known also by external evidence to be a late play. Then this test was applied to eight plays from other tests believed conjecturally to have a certain chronological sequence. It is a more delicate and difficult test than any other so far employed in research for internal evidence of the relative position of the plays in a time order of writing. It demands a fine metrical sensitivity combined with some considerable interpretive discernment on the part of the investigator.

II.

Blank verse has one important use outside its employment for dramatic speech. In long fictional narrative such as *The Ring and the Book* or *Paradise Lost* there are demanded some of the same qualities as in drama. As between the lyrical and the dramatic possibilities of verse such poetry must certainly make choice of the dramatic and not the lyrical. The Earl of Surrey's handling of blank verse, initiating the form for English poets, may be examined in his work in translating Virgil's *Aeneid,* not a play, of course, but a dramatic narrative. The portion here should seem sufficiently dramatic for illustration.

And nów we gan draw néar unto the gáte
Right wéll escape the dánger, as me thoúght,
When that at hañd a sound of feét we héard.
My fáther then, gázing throughout the dárk,
Críed on me, "Flee, són! they are at hánd."
With that bríght shiélds and shene armóur I sáw.
But thén I know not whát unfriendly Gód
My troubled wít from me beréft for feár:
For while I rán by the most sécret stréets,
Eschewing still the cómmon haúnted trácк,
From me caitíff, alas! bereávèd wás
Creusa then, my spoúse, I wot not hów;
Whether by fáte or missing of the wáy,
Or that she was by weáriness retaíned:
But never síth these eyés might her behóld;

Nor did I yet percéive that she was lóst,
Ne never báckward túrnéd I my síght,
Till we came to the híll, whereon there stoód
The old témple dédicate to Céres.

It is first to be observed that five lines out of the nineteen keep to the lyrical manner that was the author's original discipline. Two of these lines, four and five, do so by a shift from the iambic to the trochaic foot, the third in line four and the first in line five. Such substitutions are more or less legitimately frequent in blank verse. They serve here to disguise the lyrical character of the line, but they do not alter its actual rhythmic classification.

Line seven presents another problem, this time one of vocal interpretation. Another stressing of the line might yield a dramatic line by placing the primary stresses on *know* and *friend*. This would be not unreasonable, but it was probably not the writer's stressing. It seems not in keeping with his feeling for the stresses as they run.

As against these five lyrical lines there are only three that clearly have the dramatic stressing, eight, nine, and fourteen. Eight and nine have primary stresses on syllables four, eight, and ten. In fourteen the stresses are on six and ten. In line seventeen I have given stresses on four, six, and ten. In some readings the stress on six would probably not be maintained. In line twelve I give stresses on six and ten only. I strongly suspect, however, that the poet read it in his mind with a primary stress on the second syllable of Creusa. In that case it should be counted among the lyrical lines. Because of that possibility I leave it out of either list.

We must credit Surrey certainly with having contributed to English poetry one of its most powerful instruments. This initial experimenting, however, has not at all adequately realized its possibilities. It has neither the flow and fervor of lyrical poetry nor the narrative or dramatic drive that the theme demands. Half the lines — 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19 — end weakly, insufficiently weighted for the pause that clearly the poet had in mind in the writing. Lines eleven, sixteen, and eighteen run level with no material difference in the stressing of the five accented syllables. They are consequently flat and weak.

In these lines from Robert Greene's *James the Fourth*, I, i, 37-56, we pass from narrative to drama. The King of England is speaking.

Long shíne the sun of Scótland in her príde,
Her father's cómfort, and fair Scótland's bríde.
But Dorothéa, siñce I must depárt,
And leáve thee from thy tender móther's chárge,
Let me advíse my lovely daúghter fírst
What best befíts her in a fóreign lánd.
Live, Dóll, for many eyés shall look on thée,
With care of hónour and the présent státe;
For shé that steps to heíght of májesty
Is even the márk whereat the énemy aíms:
Thy vírtues shall be cónstruèd to více
Thine áffable discoúrse to abject mínd;
If cóy, detracting tóngues will call thee próud.
Be therefore wáry in this slíppery státe;
Hónour thy húsband, lóve him as thy lífe,
Make choice of friénds, as éagles of their yoúng
Who soothe no více, who flatter nót for gáin,
But love such friénds as do the trúth maintáin.
Thínk on these léssons when thou art alóne,
And thou shalt live in heálth when I am góne.

In these twenty lines we have a sharp change toward the dramatic line. Six lines have the lyrical stresses, 1, 7, 11, 12, 13, 19. Half of the lines are dramatic in the handling of the stresses — 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 14, 17, 18, 20. Line four is a bad line, starting out lyrically, sagging in the middle, and ending dramatically. Lines fifteen and nine are semi-lyrical. Probably line nine was written in a lyrical feeling in the poet and then failed of lyricism by reason of the accent on the first rather than on the third syllable of majesty. Line fifteen would become lyrical if the reader could think lightly of husbands and so soften the stress on the first syllable of the word. Line sixteen is semi-dramatic by reason of the transference of the stress that should be on the eighth syllable to the sixth.

Greene was primarily a novelist and a dramatist, one in whom the poetic feeling ran high. Presumably he took up the new mode in poetry with a mind not so much steeped in lyricism as Surrey's. At the same time many of these lines

end with words or syllables that in their meaning content as well as in their sound content do not sufficiently hold the line pause. Such are lines 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, and 15. In these lines other words are more important and would better serve to keep the voice for the line close at rest.

On the way to Shakespeare we come to Christopher Marlowe. Whatever else he did in the course of a life not wholly distinguished by sweetness and light, he made some lines that the world will not forget. His

Infinite riches in a little room

have been held by those who know to have been the rhythmic thoroughfare by which Shakespeare came to his magnificent command of language as a chariot for the parade of life. For that reason I look at two passages toward the end of *Faustus* and two passages from Act I of *Edward Second.*

Was thís the face that laúnched a thousand shíps
And búrnt the topless tówers of Ilium?
Sweet Hélen, make me immórtal with a kiśs.
Her líps suck forth my soúl; see where it fliés! —
Cóme, Helen, cóme, gíve me my sóul again.
Hére will I dwell, for heáven is in these líps,
And áll is dróss that is nót Hélena.

Of these seven lines one, three, four, and six are lyrical, and two is semi-lyrical only, made so by reason of the shift of the last primary stress from the tenth to the eighth syllable. By a like shift line seven becomes no more than semi-dramatic despite the weight of the line in four heavily stressed syllables. It is worth noting that, though the eighth syllable has the stress, the final syllable is a prolonged sound and so serves to hold the pause for the line.

Now hást thou but oñe bare hour to live,
And thén must thou be dámned perpétually!
Stand still, you ever-móving spheres of Heáven,
That time may cease and mídnight never cóme;
Fair Náture's eye, rise, ríse again and máke
Perpétual day; or let thís hour be bút
A yeár, a month, a wéek, a natural dáy,
That Fáustus may repeńt and save his soúl.

Here we have six lyrical lines — 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, — in the eight. Line one is broken by reason of a shortage of one syllable, but it is lyrically stressed. Line six is semi-lyrical,

but the shift of the stress from the tenth syllable to the eighth keeps it from the fully lyrical character. Of line six nothing better can be said than that it is weak. The reader must feel that a pause upon the last word of the line is wholly artificial.

We then look at two passages from the first Act of *Edward Second:*

I múst have wanton póets, pleasant wíts,
Musícians, that, with toúching of a lúte
May dráw the pliant Kíng which way I pleáse.
Músic and póetry is his delíght;
Thérefore I'll have Itálian másks by níght,
Sweet speéches, cómedies, and pleásing shóws;
And in the dáy, when we shall walk abróad,
Like sylvan nymphs my páges shall be clád;
My men like sátyrs grázing on the lawns,
Sháll with their goát-feet dance an antic háy.
Sómetimes a lovely bóy in Dián's shápe,
With haír that gilds the wáter as it glídes —

This speech of Edward's favorite, Gaveston, brings us at once into the lyrical movement and manner. It so continues from line one through 2, 3, 4, 10, and 12. Line eleven is semi-lyrical by the heavier stress on syllable eight than on syllable ten, a shift more noticeably to be observed in the two preceding passages from Marlowe, apparently a variation from the norm in keeping with Marlowe's lyrical feeling. Lines five, six, seven, eight, and nine are all brokenly dramatic.

Mine úncle here, this éarl, and I mysélf
Were swór-n to your fáther at his déath,
That hé should ne'er return into the réalm;
And knów, my lórd, ere I will break my oáth,
This swórd of mine that shoúld offend your foés,
Shall sleép within the scábbard at thy néed,
And underneath thy bánners march who wíll;
For Mórtimer will hang his ármour up.

This speech of the rebel Mortimer goes more singingly than it should as the talk of a violent and impassioned man. Six out of the eight lines are lyrical — 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, even

though line eight is not quite in line with the norm. Four is no more than a semi-dramatic line, and only seven may be clearly called a dramatic line.

Marlowe was a poet quite as much as he was a dramatist. His

Come live with me and be my love

is almost as much a thing for the memory as the great line of wonder at the vision of Helen in *Faustus*. That lilt of song carries over into the plays he wrote as during this period it carried over into the dramatic output of that day in general from the sonnet and the ballad, the love song and the ode.

III

One of the great virtues of Shakespeare's verse as verse to be read on the stage is its fitness for such reading by a competent actor so as to seem natural speech and not manufactured rhetoric. That achievement rests upon the somewhat steady employment of a dramatic line, one which reaches a degree of climax in the final stressed syllable so that the line pause is felt to be warranted in the weight of the word, not in a metrical necessity. Neither Surrey, Greene, nor Marlowe attained that mastery of blank verse as fully as Shakespeare. These lines from Act IV, scene i of *The Merchant of Venice* are illustrative of the ease and dramatic flow that are peculiarly Shakespearean.

But líttle: I am ármed and wéll prepáred.
Give me your hánd, Bassanio: fáre you wéll!
Grieve nót that I am fállen to this for yóu;
For herein Fórtune shows hersélf more kínd
Than is her cústom: it is stíll her úse
To let the wrétched man outlive his weálth,
To view with hóllow eye and wrínkled brów
An age of póverty; from which língering pénance
Of such mísery doth she cút me óff.
Comménd me to your hónorable wífe:
Tell her the prócess of António's énd:
Say how I lóved you, speak me fáir in deáth;
And when the tale is tóld, bid her be júdge

Whether Bassánio had not ónce a lóve.
Repent but yóu that you should lóse your friénd,
And he repents nót that he páys your débt;
For if the Jéw do cut but déep enoúgh,
I'll pay it présently with áll my héart.

In this there are two lyrical lines, three and ten. Line one has more than the ordinary number of syllables receiving a primary stress. It may be read with only a secondary stress on the word well, the eighth syllable. It then becomes a lyrical line. Line nine must be looked upon as a piece of confused and stumbling rhythm. The remaining fourteen lines out of the eighteen are dramatic lines. This play belongs to the second period of the dramatist's work. Neilson and Thorndike in *The Facts About Shakespeare* speak of it as exhibiting "the dramatist in complete control of his technical instrument."

From the standpoint of the canvassing here this speech of Antonio's must be seen as Shakespeare at his best rhythmically. The degree in which he reached this rhythmic best or maintained it, when sufficiently investigated by a body of research students, preferably somewhat separated and so not too much dominated by one influence, should form a substantial ground for determining the relative sequence of the writing of the plays. In a variety of ways the problem in this approach is a difficult one. If it should ever receive sufficient attention it should add appreciably to the evidence by which some of the more doubtful plays may be more nearly dated. It might also have some contributing evidence to offer for saying that a man by the name of William Shakespeare did or did not write the greatest body of dramatic literature so far known to the world.

TWO SONNETS

By INEZ BARCLAY KIRBY

BRIEF RECORDING

Set in my spirit like a jewel, burns
The memory of moonlight on the sea
Upon a night whose loveliness returns
As melody returns — insistently.
I woke at midnight when the clouds had passed;
Upon my pillow and the cabin wall
Pine shadows lay on silver. Through the vast
Cathedral silence breathed no sound at all.

The white sea beckoned. Moon-mist fold on fold
Clothed me in samite as I walked the shore;
My quickened heart expanding sought to hold
The muted light that paved the ocean floor
And stole upon the senses, but could find
Only a brief recording in the mind.

SALT MARSH

Dank from the marsh, miasmal vapors rise.
This is the place where the self-purging sea
Tosses the wreckage that offends her eyes,
Hawk-mangled fish and nettles ozzily
Heaving and falling with the changeful tide.
Step warily here; the too incautious tread
May shudder down beneath the slime and glide
With sick recoil among the weltering dead.

This is the marsh. But gazed at from afar,
A new and changeling loveliness it shows:
Here butterflies and redwinged blackbirds are
Busy all day; here the pale mallow grows
And slender grasses wave with languid grace
Or fondly bend as to a loved one's face.

THE MARRIAGE OF TRISTRAM

By JOHN HEARD

The yellow dawn stole from the restless sea;
The soft white fog retreated fold on fold,
And wrapped itself about the time-worn walls
Of proud King Jocelyn's wave-encircled keep
That, like a solitary, gray-backed gull,
Perched on a windy rock, watched the bleak sea.
The long night waned; the stars grew dim and died;
But rest came not to Tristram's bitter thoughts,
Nor killed the gloomy phantoms of his brain
That, like the ever-present memories
Of wrongful deeds, stalked through his restless mind;
For he was troubled and his heart oppressed
By doubt and dread and vague uncertainty
As he lay silent by the slender girl
Sleeping beside him on the nuptial couch.
Fair was she, ay, divinely fair, his bride,
Isolde Blanchemains, Jocelyn's only child,
Whom he had wed that day — he scarce knew why.
She seemed so frail, so childlike and so young,
Nestling against his rude and brawny frame
That, as he gazed, he wondered at himself,
For child sprang quicker to his lips than wife.
Yet wife she was, and all that past was dead, —
That past so full of bitter and of sweet,
Of laughter and of tears, of bliss and grief!
His stormy life had ended, then, in this, —
This child, this merest wisp of womanhood!
It seemed so strange that he, whom all the knights
Of Arthur's court had not o'ercome with lance
And sword; whose heart had quickened not one beat
Beneath the burning looks of Guenevere's
Most peerless dames, — and all for love of one
Who was his life, — should be subdued at last
By this frail girl who slept beside him now,
Her head thrown back, while round her childlike face
There swept a mass of dusky curls that framed

It close, as men are wont to frame a pearl
Of priceless worth in gold and colored silks,
That from the contrast it may shine the more.
So shone her face within her loosened hair
That veiled her as she lay, resting her head
Upon his rugged arm. One snowy hand
Had twined itself among his tawny locks,
While absently he held the other one,
On which but yesterday, with loving care,
He'd slipped the marriage ring of yellow gold,
Formed of two strands so cunningly entwined
That no beginning could be found, nor end.
Isolde Goldenhaired had given it him
Long years ago, when, o'er the Irish sea,
He led her as the promised bride of Mark,
Who waited for her on the Cornish strand.
The ring she gave when Fate had bid them drink
The cup which bound forever their two souls
Together by a mystic bond of love
Undying and eternal, that should hold
Their hearts through life, and even after death.
These threads, she said, were symbols of themselves,
For their great love had got so strong a hold
That their two lives became entwined as one,
And never could be severed, though wide realms
And stormy seas might lie between, and Mark
In jealous rage might drive them far apart.
First kissing it, she laid it in his hand
And told him that, if e'er he gave the ring
To any woman, she, the Goldenhaired,
Must die. Such was the magic spell once wrought
By snowy-bearded Merlin's awful art.
But he, forgetful of her warning words,
Or else indifferent to what might befall,
Bestowed the ring upon his new-wed bride,
Thinking Isolde dead, or that her love
Had altered, and that now, perhaps, she looked
Upon some newer Tristram with those eyes
Which once had flashed with love for him alone.
For many years had passed since he had fled,
An outlaw, from his uncle's jealous rage;

Nor once in all those years had any bard,
Or wandering merchant brought him word or news,
Or any token that she loved him still,
Or even lived. And so it came to pass
That during many years in bitter grief,
Restless, he wandered on from land to land.
And many mighty deeds he did in each
That gained him ever greater praise of men.
But he cared not for glory and rode on,
On through a world of emptiness and gloom,
Where shone no sun, nor moon, nor any star;
Where night seemed but a shadow of the day,
For so embittered was his soul by pain
That light and life and honor were as dead.
Thus all the earth became a wilderness
Where, like a traveller consumed with thirst,
He wandered with his sorrow and his love,
Till, from the faithlessness of one, the world
Appeared reversed; each mountain seemed a plain,
Each rolling plain a labyrinth of hills;
And every man he met a hypocrite;
And in his mind each maiden was a drab.
So, when he came upon young Percival,
Who went his pious way with but a staff
For weapon and a tattered shirt for arms,
He railed at him for his sham innocence.
But this mere stripling smote him from his horse,
And left him wounded, lying in the dust.
Then Tristram rose, and sadly went his way
Until he came to Jocelyn's realm, that stretched
Along the wind-blown coast of Brittany;
And there Isolde Blanchemains, Jocelyn's child,
With gentle care had healed his smarting wounds.

Long had he lingered at this noble court,
And great renown had won by knightly deeds.
But ever was he sad, and sat aloof,
Shunning the feasts and revellings that made
The lofty hall re-echo with the sounds
Of mirth. And at such times it was his wont
To steal unnoticed from the room and seek

Some high and lonely turret which looked out
Upon the restless sea. Sadly he gazed
Across the gray expanse toward Cornwall's shore,
Hoping that one of all the ships that passed
Might bring a message bidding him return.
And then, when night had hid the restless seas,
He sighed, and going to his chamber, took
His harp, and sitting by a casement wide
That opened to the North, he sang the song
Which he had sung long years ago when both
Had drunk the fatal draught of love and pain:—
"Isolde la Blonde, Isolde m'amie,
En vous ma mort, en vous ma vie!"
And thus the leaden-footed years had passed
Till he prayed God to let him die, so great
The love and anguish that consumed his heart.
Then imperceptibly, like tiny drops
That all unnoticed gather till they form
A pool, a brook, and then a raging stream,
His life-devouring love was turned to hate,
As fierce and venomous as serpents' gall,
Which stung his soul until Isolde's name
Rang in his ears as some foul blasphemy
Rings in a dimly lighted church where monks
On bended knees are celebrating mass,
Inspired by a holy ecstasy.
So, as before he loved her, now he loathed
Her memory, and wished that one would bring
Him word that she was dead.

And thus it chanced
That once, when in his bitterest mood he paced
The battlements with angry strides, and strove
To banish the black thoughts which thronged his mind,
He came upon a lone, deserted tower,
Half ruinous, where old and crumbling stones,
Dislodged by time and storm and overgrown
By clinging ivy, made a hidden bower;
And coming suddenly upon the place,
He found Isolde Blanchemains there. The girl,

Thinking herself alone, and unaware
Of his approach, was gazing at a ring
Which, half in jest, he once had given her.
And ever and again she kissed the ring
And sighed. Then, hearing steps, the maiden turned,
And, meeting Tristram's wondering look, she blushed,
And swiftly hid the trinket in her breast,
And would have fled, but he in courtesy
Retained her there, and spake such gentle words
As banished fear and set her at her ease.
Then, as they lingered talking, Tristram knew
What all the court had known for many moons.
Sadly he shook his head, and went his way;
But his black mood was gone; the bitterness
That filled his soul had ceased to sting, and wrath
Gave place to peace. And so the days wore on
Until, by slow degrees, her silent love,
Her gentle ways and tender looks relit
In him the smouldering embers of his love;
So, though the past was forgotten still,
And hatred for Isolde Goldenhaired
Lived on, and rankled deep within his heart,
Yet in his mind the twain became confused,
Isolde Blanchemains, and Isolde la Blonde,
And loving one, it seemed that he loved both,
Or neither; nor was faithless to his vows,
When in a mood where pity was one half
Sad loneliness and love the other part,
He took the maiden both as child and wife.
Such were the thoughts revolving in his mind
As he lay sleepless on his wedding night.
And, wondering on the changes time had wrought,
It seemed the two Isoldes were but one,
And that this second might yet be the first,
Whom he had loved, in altered form and face.
As thus he pondered, lo, the dawn was come
And made the Gothic window seem a shape
Clear outlined, like a spot against the wall,
As on a shield an argent emblem shines
Upon a sable ground. He gazed, and longed
For day to come that he might rise and drive

These phantoms from his troubled brain, and clear
His soul of all sad thoughts and past regrets
By looking long into Isolde's eyes,
Those azure pools of calm serenity
In which he drowned all sorrow and became
His own strong self again. But, as he dreamed,
Watching intently for the sun's first ray,
He heard a picking at the window-pane,
And saw a bird that fluttered 'gainst the glass.
He watched it as it struggled, but the bird,
As though enangered at the obstacle,
Redoubled its assault with piercing cries.
Then Tristram, rising gently, freed his hair
Which fair Isolde's hand held fast, and went
On tip-toe, lest he wake his sleeping bride,
Impatient at the bird, yet curious too.
He threw the casement wide; the bird flew in.
And with it seemed to come a gleam of light
Which filled the chamber with a golden glow,
As when a sunbeam falls upon a pool
Of tranquil water in the sleeping woods.
The bird with joyous cries flew round the room,
And settled fearlessly upon his hand;
Then Tristram saw, and seeing he turned pale,
And leaned against the wall, with heart grown faint,
And sick.—'T was Chantedoux, the nightingale,
That fairy bird with magic power to sing
To lovers whom cold Fate keeps far apart;
And in their sorrowing ears his song assumes
The voice of the belovèd one; each note
Rings like some sweet, love-laden word; and, too,
No surer messenger than Chantedoux.
Must messages of high import be sent
From far off lands and over distant seas,
This bird, with Petiteri, the Comforter,
The wond'rous dog of azure and of gold,
Wrought in the mystic wold of Avalon
By mighty Urgan, slain by Tristram's sword,
He gave Isolde, knowing they must part,
And many sad and weary days must come
When they should be far from each other's side.

Then Tristram saw that what at first had seemed
A ray of light that flooded all the room
With brilliant glow, was one long strand of hair
Bound round the bird's soft neck; and on this tress
Of Queen Isolde's hair was strung a ring
Wherein was set the emerald he had won
In that last tournament at Arthur's court,
When, in Isolde's name, he challenged knights
From all the world, and smote them down, and sent
Them, conquered, to do homage at her feet.
The jewel set in massive yellow gold
He gave to her at parting, when she wept
Hot, bitter tears that he must ride away,
And leave her to drag out her lonely life,
Condemned by men, and shamed, yet loved by Mark,
Whom she despised and loathed like some foul toad;
And all because of Melot's treachery,
For he, made mad by jealousy and love,
Had led the angry king by tortuous paths
Into the fragrant garden where the twain
Used every night to meet beneath the moon,
And spend long hours in the heavy air
Of roses and of lilacs, free from thought,
And blissful in each others' company.
And, when he gave the ring, Tristram had said
That if the time should come when she desired
His arm in battle, or his heart in love
She need but send the ring, and he would come
O'er land and sea with all the speed he might.

With trembling fingers which he scarce could see
Through the hot mist of tears that dimmed his sight,
He loosed the yellow tress and took the ring.
The bird, when no more round its neck it felt
The golden burden, fluttered off to join
Its fellows in the sleeping woods. But he
Looked at the token in his hand and cried:
"Too late, too late!"; for in his heart flamed fierce
The ancient passion; — she had sent for him —
She loved him still, and he, untrue, had let
Mistrust and anger sear their deathless love,

Obscuring for a space her memory.
But, as a light, which for a time is dimmed,
Appears the brighter when it glows anew,
So, in his heart the fire, a time subdued,
The fiercer glowed and burned into his soul.
He writhed in anguish, moaning bitterly:
"Too late, too late! Isolde, O my love!"
And cursed himself for fickle and untrue.
Like hyssop, adding bitterness to gall,
He knew that she was dead; the ring she gave
Was resting on another woman's hand.
Then starting up, he seized his sword. No doubt
Remained within his heart; he must obey
The summons she had sent by Chantedoux.
To Cornwall lay his course once more to see
Her face.

With shaking hand he girt his sword,
Made fast his crested helm, and snatched his shield,
Which now for many months had hung unused
And rusting on the wall. But, as he left
The room, Isolde Blanchemains cried aloud,
Vexed by some evil dream, and stretching forth
Her arms, called to him: "Tristram, Tristram, stay . . .
Go not away, dear friend. Ah, leave me not!"
He heeded not her words, and turned his back,
For now he cared no more for this mere child
Than cares an angry sea for any straw
Its roaring waves bear on their foaming crests.
He lingered not, but muttering to himself,
Strode on, and hastened through the silent halls
Where many-a guest, o'ercome with sleep and wine,
Lay snoring on the floor; he passed them by
Unnoticed as they slept, and turned his steps
Down to the restless sea where lay the ships,
And, careless which he took, he leaped aboard,
And hoisting high the sail, he grasped the helm,
And steered the vessel northwards to the sea
That swelled and foamed, lashed by a rising wind.
The waves ran high; the spray dashed o'er the ship,
And smote upon his face and tawny hair

As he stood by the helm, immovable.
But he, caring for neither wind nor sea,
Sailed out alone upon his hopeless quest;
And ever and again he cried aloud,
In agony of sorrow and remorse:
"Too late, too late! Isolde, O my love!"
And his wild cries were mingled with the cries
Of shrilling sea-birds screaming down the blast
That tore the white crests from the fleeing waves.

All day he sailed, but when the evening came,
The storm abated, and a thick white fog
Fell on the deep, — a soft enshrouding cloak — .
But Tristram, standing by the helm, steered on
Until the wind was still. The flapping sails
Hung flat and idle, dropping down great drops
That fell like tears upon the deck below.
The waves splashed plaintively against the ship
That bobbed, and swayed, and rolled upon the sea
Of swinging, heaving glass. Then, suddenly,
There came, soft floating through the silent fog,
The sounds of weeping, and a funeral dirge:

"Weep for Isolde, Queen of the North!
Weep for her, weep.
Peerless Isolde, Ireland's Queen!
Weep for her, weep.
Great-souled Isolde, Isolde la Blonde!
Weep for her, weep.
Lo, she is dead of a broken heart!
Weep for her, weep.
Mourning for Tristram, Tristram untrue!
Weep for her, weep."

And he, fearful lest in the fog the ship
Might pass him by unseen, picked up his harp
And played; and as he played, his soul rose up
And flowed out through the fog in his great song:
"Isolde la Blonde, Isolde m'amie,
En vous ma mort, en vous ma vie!"

Then through the blinding white he saw a glow,
Golden and dim, but in its dimness bright,
That, shining through the fog, made all the sea
Gleam gold and amber far around the ship.
Harping and singing, so he drifted on,
And steered for where he heard the funeral dirge,
For there the light glowed brightest through the mist.
And sudden through the fog he saw a prow
Come gliding till it was beside his bark;
And on this mystic ship, that seemed a ghost
Born of the blinding whiteness of the fog,
He saw Isolde lying on a bier
Of ivory o'erspread with snow-white silk;
And all about her lay her yellow hair
Down-flowing from the bier and o'er the deck,
As springs a brooklet from amid the rocks
And floods the grassy meadow far and wide.
So now the golden river of her hair
Swept down and covered all except her face
Which lay serenely fair, — a lily white
That bloomed amid a bed of yellow leaves, —
The beacon light toward which he steered his course
Unerring through the whiteness of the fog.

The ships lay side by side, while 'tween the two
The swinging seas were sobbing sad and low;
And all about the bier the women stood
And wept, singing their funeral song of grief
And praise for fair Isolde Goldenhaired.
Then through their midst strode Tristram walking slow;
Dry-eyed and gaunt, but in his face there shone
A peaceful light, a joy of sorrow born,
And standing by the bier he waved aside
The weeping throng who without word drew back,
Moved by the solemn anguish of the scene,
And left the twain alone. Gently he stooped
And kissed the silent lips:

"At last, at last,
Beloved One, our lips may meet, and none,
Not God himself, nor any mortal man,

Nor Mark, thy jealous mate, can come between
Or censure our eternal unity.
While yet we lived, the cruel laws of man
Brought pain and sorrow, but in Death no law
Exists to keep me from thee, for our souls
Were plighted, though in life ourselves might love
By stealth alone; yet now, in death, I come
And loudly, openly, before the world
I claim thee as my everlasting bride,
And by thy side, set free from earthly bonds,
Stride out into Eternity!"

The fog
That shroud-like lay upon the sea, — a cloak
Of deathly whiteness, — parted, and a ray
Shone from the West. The misty banks rolled back,
And, fold on fold, dissolved before the sun.
And thus it seemed as if the heavy cloud,
Which through their lives had overshadowed them,
Had lifted, and the evening of their love
Was clear and peaceful after Life's long storm.
The sun, which all the day had been obscured,
Broke through the fog, and shed its flaming rays
Of golden yellow o'er the heavy seas,
Then went to rest in one vast flare of light,
Of crimson and of ruddy gold.

He stooped,
And in his mighty arms he raised his bride,
And, passing down the deck into his ship,
There on a pile of furs he laid her down,
And with his sword cut loose the ropes that bound
His bark, and, pushing off, he took the helm
And steered his course straight for the setting sun.
Then, as the bark began to move, he left
The helm and took his harp, and sat himself
Beside his bride, and, as long years agone
He sang when they became betrothed in heart,
So now he sang the same grand song again, —
The marriage anthem of their plighted souls — .
And, as the mourners watched the ship sail on,

The song grew fainter, and the passing bark,
Enveloped in the evening haze that shed
An all-forgiving and all-hallowing glow
Upon the living and the dead, passed on,
And was engulfed within the darkling seas
Of all Eternity of Time and Thought,
Until, a speck that drifted down the path
Of gold, it vanished in the sunset glow,
Bearing them to the altar of the sun.
And still their marriage anthem floating back
Came whispering softly o'er the darkening sea:—

"Isolde la Blonde, Isolde m'amie,
En vous ma mort, en vous ma vie!"

EVENING PRAYER

Make me a builder of bridges, O God!
Spanning the vistas and valleys unknown,
Crossing the highways the eagle has flown,
Joining the clouds and the green of the sod.

Make me a bringer of light, O Lord!
Brightening the dusk of men in the dark,
Candling the nights unknown to the lark,
Widening horizons fear-closed by the sword.

A builder of bridges . . . a bringer of light,
Hesperian hymns in the quiet of night . . .
Expounder of wonders; prophetic, humane,
Glancing from earth to the heavens again;
Filled with the powerful essence of right,
Make me a builder and bringer of light!

George Furman Andrews

EDGAR HATING

By ROBERT S. LEHMAN

By noon the sun stood rampant in the south,
Thawing black-fertile winter-frozen ploughland,
Stirring the sap. At noon the sun swung up
Over the sycamore, and washed in brightness
The second-floor room where Edgar Hating lay —
Shapeless upon the floor, a heaped-up figure
With arms and legs askew. The clean light
Fell through the window on his huddled hand,
Then slowly widened over the arm and shoulder
And set a brightness on the haggard mouth.

It took some time, before the shining shaft
Pried open Edgar Hating's lidded eyes. . . .
They opened, sunlight smote them, he recalled
How he had poked the fire to make it burn,
And then had brought the pistol from the cupboard,
Had slipped the cartridge in the burnished chamber
And poked the fire again and shot himself.

Awake, the dull brain turned wearily
Pacing again habitual corridors:
'Something we have forgot, something once known
And now no more. The animals know still,
Love and hate freely, with full love and hate.
We only, we have forgotten;
And love cannot shine through the waiting heart,
Cannot transfix it, the breathless bright terror of love.
No man is known to other, no man dares love,
The burden of loneliness is heavy on us.
No man is known, dares love . . . '

(*And through the window*
Through the grey and dingy glass, shining the sun!
The phoenix sun, the god!)

His eyelids sagged.
The place of motivation is at the first,
Not at the flawed conclusion. He was not glad
Nor yet unhappy, to know he was not dead —
Merely beyond the grief and gladness tired.
Proverbial phrases seeped into his thought;
"Spilt milk . . . " he said aloud; his mouth was wry
To hear himself, who mocked at apothegms,
Speak one so patly.

(*While through the window the sun*
Hurled his light, his brave blinding spears:
O spearman of shining!)

Tiredness pressed upon him.
The brain relaxed exhausted in the skull,
And arched nerveless bone constrained his thought.
Irrelevant to his will, along his mind
There fluttered vague inchoate images
Too quick and faint for thought to recognize them.
His mind muttered in his troubled sleep.

* * *

An age had passed, an hour, or a moment,
When Edgar Hating heard the voice above him,
A man's voice, speaking some words or other,
"My God, he's shot himself," or some such thing.
And immanent there, not in the words but through them,
Deep in the voice, a deep exultant ring,
Intangible as smoke and real as pain,
A searching love, of earth and water and fire,
Of hungers, food and woman. The sudden voice
Splintered the sleep from Edgar Hating's body,
And rent the sleep from Edgar Hating's brain.
Eyes opened: sudden saw sunlight:
Drowning dingy room a flaming flood:
Breath caught, pulses pounded in throat:
The sun's chant strained in his ribs distended.

Then, "No," he said, "an accident,
That happened when I cleaned my gun"; and smiled,
Not bitter or sardonic, only smiling,
To hear himself, who hated platitudes,
So plain a liar, so dull a novelist.

SUNSET AT GETTYSBURG

Silence, supreme peace at sunset,
In springtime falls on the field —
  Memorial figures, half-spectral, in marble and bronze,
  And little white crosses in row upon row;
Nebulous shadows on graves of the men, young and old,
  Who loved life but gave it;
Soft vespers of birds in battle-scarred trees that once
  Shaded the wounded and dying,
Young grass, green on the earth where bodies were mangled—
  arms, legs, eyes—splintered and crushed—in the wheatfield,
Spring flowers blooming, by gigantic boulders,
Where once lay the carnage of shrapnel-torn flesh, —
Where dauntless dreams of Eternal faith lay crushed by the
    tramping of horses and soldiers' boots,
Where high hopes of home and love lay shattered by bullets
    and eternally broken by bayonets.

Questioning ghosts of the fallen come stealing back at sunset,
Quietly stealing to earth in the springtime — and wonder —
  Are the little white crosses adumbrant; the shadowy names
    but faint memories?
Why do the echoes of war drums minaciously sound in the
    distance?
Where are the hopes and the dreams and the faith of their
    comrades?
Has God forgotten the price that was paid by their life-blood?
Thus do they wonder, those fallen, who rise up at springtime,
  Rise up and move o'er the field,
  In the silence at sunset.

— *Lorena Marsh Gary*

THE MEETING OF ODYSSEUS AND NAUSICAA

By MARJORIE BURKE

ODYSSEUS:

Is it thee
dear to hillock
protectress
Artemis?
Or a maid
most like to thee?
Such light-blown hair
and straight-grown form
I saw in one rare palm
at Delos.

I would bend my knee
to touch thine,
and still I dread
to beg for aid;
the sea hath bruised me
for twenty days
and nights —
red-tipped waves
have crushed me
and cast me
at this place:
I fear some God
is keeping me
for constant unrelief.

NAUSICAA:

The Gods deem happy
the man who takes
libation with friends
and pride in his house —
Thou must have
a gift of misfortune
to be so lost —

(yet not unthoughtless)
Not every God
is bent against thee
the sea hath brought thee
safe to Phaëcia —
water guards the place —
Alcinöus is king,
I am his daughter.

ODYSSEUS:

O high-born maid,
I beg of thee
a simple rag;
my nudity
hath sent a-run
thy trim-haired maids,
thy white-armed playmates:
I would to the city
and pray to Alcinöus
a gift of well-keeping,
and pray to the Gods
what thou most implore,
a well-arrayed husband,
a marriage concordant,
for truly
such come from the Gods.

NAUSICAA:

The hand of a suppliant
bears its due
as he bears his lot
in this Phaëcian land.
Here is raiment
for thy body
and sweet oil —

ODYSSEUS:

First I would clean
the crusted brine
from my hair and limbs,

then dear to my skin
will be oil
and bright dress —
(my modesty
compels me
to bathe in secret;
I would not offend
thy maids and thee).

(*Departs*)

NAUSICAA:

O little maids,
come back!
You frighted ones,
come back
and mix the wine with water
(that stranger
is no wretched lion).
You angered ones,
come back
and fetch some good repast
to light his hunger.

O little ones,
look thou to the shore.
See how he cool returns
like some bright king
from the sea.

My thoughts are scattered quick —
new-free birdlings —
at the beauty of him:
Oh, that I could call such
my husband!
Happy the maid
who will bind her tresses high
with white hill flowers
flecked with amber light —
she will deck her feet
with gold-braid sandal

flexed for dancing —
and her parents will joy
that she wed him.

ODYSSEUS (*returns*):
I will sup
at thy bidding,
then glimpse
thy father's city.

NAUSICAA:
We shall tug the mules —
follow brisk
behind the carriage
until we pass through fields
where corn is tilled —
and come to our
high-towered city.
In our path
is the place
men rear the ships —
O shame!
I tremble slight
when I recall
their sure taunts,
they will say
there is no hope
for Phaëcian men;
that I found
a sea-washed stranger
for husband;
or a God,
knowing my prayer
came to cherish me:
I too would deem such a maid
no gift to her parents
who thus unwed
would accompany a man.

So I will leave thee
at my father's garden,

you can find the castle
from there;
Go first to my mother,
win her kindness,
then my father
will aid and shelter thee.

ODYSSEUS:

O Pallas,
Goddess unweary,
hear my prayer:
grant me kindness and help
from these people;
my feet quiver
to start homeward.

SEA-TROVE

Such as may be my wealth of love I offer,
Wholly I give you; only have and keep.
Plunge both your hands into the golden coffer —
It is more wide than space, than time more deep.
Take, take of me your pleasure and your fill,
Be lavish with me, have no fear of ending;
Play prodigal or miser as you will,
The heart is yours, its coin is all your spending.

I was an iron-bound casket that had lain
Long sunken on the green floor of the Sea,
Until you, Pirate, dreamed me up again,
And sprung the lock, and set my treasure free,
And gave the high adventure back to me —
Blue sky, and snowy galleons from Spain!

— *William Hester*

POEMS BY ARNO HOLZ

Translated by Lucille E. Hein*

I.

Three
little roadways
with small houses like toys from a box of playthings
flow into the still market place.

The old fountain before the wee church murmurs,
the
lindens . . . breathe fragrance . . .
That
is the . . . entire . . . little town.

But beyond this
there, where from a deep, blue, far-distant heaven the sky-larks sing,
shines
the . . . sea,
and forests darken and cornfields wave.

To me
all this is . . . like a dream!

Should I . . . remain? . . . Should I
Advance further?

The . . . fountain . . . murmurs . . . the . . . lindens
. . . breathe fragrance . . .

II.

THE ANCIENT CORNFIELD LINDEN

From a cornfield, sloping to the sea,
shady, ancient,

*From **Die Schönsten Deutschen Gedichte**; Pages 366-368. From the **Phantasus** of Arno Holz (1898).

with peeling bark and wide branches, bent and gnarled and
split by the lightning blow,
crumbling into clay,
rises
the
Linden.

On
narrow footpaths
chattering, sauntering, joyously lazy,
past the town
between
flowers, tale-bearing poppies, colored grasses,
asters, thyme,
snap-dragons, and camomile,
each afternoon in the July heat,
we
young lads . . . went . . . to bathe.

The
shining
pure, distant, clear blue
heavens;
the
hundred, hundred
and
more than a hundred thousand
little, sweet-smelling, delicate,
lacy,
light-flashing, small, dainty,
hanging
bell-like flowers . . . with . . . bees buzzing about!

And
yet always
when all the others
long since
were at the bottom,
and from the water rang their
laughter,

their splashing and shrieking,
I stood still.

And
saw the heavens . . . and . . . heard the bees
and
breathed . . . the . . . fragrance!

III.

FIRST LARK

Between
the graves . . . and . . . graying
hedges,
with
coat-collar high, and both hands in my pockets,
sauntering
I
walked in the fresh
March morning.

Pale grasses,
glittering pools and black fallow land,
as far as . . . I . . . could see.

Between this
stretching
into the far whitening horizon —
how
motionless! a . . . range of meadows.

I remain standing.

nowhere a sound. Nowhere a
stirring.

Only the wind . . . and . . . the landscape.

And
without joy . . . like the heavens . . . I feel . . .
my heart.

Suddenly . . . a sound!

A faint, tender . . . trembling jubilation
which
slowly
ever higher
mounts!

I
peer . . . into . . . the clouds.

Over me
whirling, vanishing, flitting and turning, wing-blessed,
scarcely discernible,
a small black dot,
dashing
through
ever clearer streams of light,
the
first . . . skylark!

THERE IS BUT ONE

There is but one among the churchyard graves
Where each love, in its turn, threw up a mound;
But one among the crew of faithless knaves
Who holds my heart, though fast beneath the ground.
For sometimes, on sad pinions, Thought in flight
Circles the dark place where the cedars rise;
And marks one spot still green within the night,
And pausing — wonders if his death were wise.
Grass still grows fresh among the nettles here,
And there the new moon, rising thin and bright,
Sees Love upon its knees as if in prayer,
And setting, sees Love rise as if in fright.

Only I know that here my true love lies,
And weaves his spell — with pennies on his eyes.

— *Blanche Yvonne Mosler*

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